

## FOREWORD

*(First Edition)*

The first birth-centenary of Prof. Puran Singh is to be celebrated in 1981.

As part of celebrations, the Punjabi University, Patiala is bringing out the hitherto unpublished works of Puran Singh, in Punjabi, Hindi and English, in fulfilment of its commitment. The University has also started a quarterly journal 'Puran Singh Studies' as another part of the centenary Programme.

Puran Singh left a number of original writings and translated works in the form of manuscripts. The story of Princess Prakasina, completed by the author in 1922, has remained unpublished so far. Prakasina was the princess— daughter of the ruler of a Buddhist Kingdom, located in the Pothohar region of the ancient Punjab. The princess loved and dedicated herself to a prince turned Bodhisattva a wise and enlightened soul carrying the message of Lord Budha to his people. Puran Singh's narration has transformed history into a superb piece of literature.

The manuscript was entrusted to S. Kartar Singh Duggal, a renowned Punjabi writer for editing. He has done a good job of his assignment, for which the University is grateful to him.

On the occasion of the first centenary of Prof. Puran Singh's birth, the Department of Punjabi Literary Studies presents this work of Prof. Puran Singh, as its humble contribution.

July, 1980  
Patiala

RATTAN SINGH JAGGI

“Ashoka—the great emperor who united India, and made the influence of his empire felt from Ceylon to the limits of Syria and Egypt, deliberately recognising Buddhism as its unifying force,—gave the weight of his personal influence to those thinkers who must have been closely allied to the Northern school, though with Asiatic toleration he patronised their opponents also and did not fail to countenance the Brahmanical religion itself. His son Mahindra converted Ceylon to Buddhism, laying the foundations thereof Northern school, which still survived in the seventh century, when Gensho (Hieuntsang) visited India, till the reflux from Siam, a few centuries later, of the Southern doctrine, of which it remains the present strong-hold.

Northern India and Kashmir, where immediate disciples preached the faith, formed the busiest seat of Buddhist activity. It was in Kashmir, in the first century after Christ, that Kanishka—that king of the Gettaes, who extended his power from Central Asia to the Punjab, and left his foot-prints at Mathura near Agra,—called a great Buddhist council, whose influence spread Buddhism further into Central Asia. But all this was only enforcing the work begun by Ashoka the great descendent of Chandra Gupta (Fourth century B.C.)—

—OKAKURA

## PREFACE

*(First Edition)*

No definite or indefinite details as to the site and the times of the story narrated in the following pages could have been at all even remotely guessed from the vague rumours in the freed mouths of confused traditions heard from old men and women to whom the story was subject of a Katha—a recital, a chant with explanatory extempore additions. History does not become ripe in its lesson, till it has forgotten its own time and space, and descends as a song on the tongues of men, or sinks as a beautiful story into the depths of human consciousness becoming an organic part of it.

One may, however, guess that, most probably, there was, out of the innumerable Buddhist estates and kingdoms one small Buddhist kingdom of Anardha, mentioned in our story, historically speaking, perhaps all so insignificant, in that corner of the north-west India which is now known by the name of Pothohar, Dhani and Hazara. There is, no doubt, that this part of the country, at one time, was full of monasteries and stupas; and many of these important historical sites of the old Buddhistic periods of history were buried here by Time. Taxila, the old Buddhistic University had sunk in earth, not at very great distance from Anardha, the capital of this kingdom. Occasionally the Chinese and other pilgrims roamed about Anardha to verify some important details of history as recorded by the famous Chinese travellers, the glorious past had left but these last remnants and ruins as pathetic tales of Buddhism in India.

In this small, almost unknown kingdom of Anardha, ruled over by an Arahaat, in succession similar to what, at least, in dead form if not in spirit, still exists in Tibet in Lamaism, had gathered most of the holy men and women, driven out of the other parts of the country, persecuted by the satanic followers of the vedic ritualism. Here did bum quietly for a brief while of about 200 years or so the Great Lamp in its, let us say, last beautiful flicker, centuries before the fresh onslaught of the Moslem iconoclasts of Central Asia.

This Arahaat had modified Buddhism some-what radically and we might say it was a new-Buddhism of his own.

Whether the story is true or not, as to the names of persons and places and religions or as to the exact layer of the historical period to which it belongs, this much is vouchsafed, that it does truly record the private life of a great and noble man who once ruled over a kingdom in which he had his immediate religious ancestors had actually realised a Utopia of an ideal political estate; the Buddhism in its peculiar individualistic Anardha-modification had once become both the religion and the politics of the people of that little country.

Like the pages of an old manuscript, in spite of many portions of it being somewhat indistinct and blurred, the story might, even in its narration in English, a language foreign to the author, it is hoped, still scintillate with the light that the author as a boy, beheld on the faces of men and women figuring in the story, as it was being word— painted before his eyes by the great storytellers, the grand old men who have become well-nigh extinct due to the general drive of the old by the new types of men.

The self-realised, enlightened simplicity of human life in its own perfect health, sympathy, labour and love is, after all, the highest religion that the kings of Anardha taught their people and wrought it in, into the consciousness of the people by their occult genius of the supernatural vision.

Gwalior, Central India  
December, 1922

PURAN SINGH

## **PREFACE**

*(Second Edition)*

Professor Puran Singh needs no introduction as he is well-known and much loved versatile poet and writer and enjoys a distinguished place in the field of literature. His writing skill is not only reflected in his Punjabi literary works, he also chose Hindi and English language as medium of expression of his overwhelming divine thought.

In celebrating his first birth century in 1981, Punjabi University Patiala decided to publish the unpublished works left by him, as a mark of tribute to him and the first edition of 'Prakasina' was presented by the Department of Punjabi Literary Studies, to the readers as a token of great respect and love for this great son of Punjab.

Professor Puran Singh was impressed and fascinated by the stories narrated by the story-tellers about an ideal King named Jasmanji of Anardha, now known as Pothohar, Dhani and Hazara. Based on these ancient stories concerned with this region the author created 'Prakasina'. Though, it is a love story of Princess Prakasina and Manmahaji, it is enriched with mysticism and highlights the highest principles of life. We see in this book, how a man adopting these principles like love, honesty, justice, equality, humility and getting religious minded turns from an ordinary human being into angelic personality. How they achieved transcendental state of mind where they could visualize their future and look into the past, where the phenomena of the individual souls meeting the departed divine souls appears to be very normal and natural.

Through simple living and high thinking and leading ethico-spiritual life the people of Anardha created heaven on earth.

This book inspires its readers to make the best of life and gain perfection. Such people are spiritually beautiful and helps creating a beautiful world. They are ever blissful here and hereafter.

The Punjabi Literary Studies Department now takes pleasure in presenting its second edition to the readers. We hope, it will be loved by them.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE KING IN DISGUISE

Old days are gone, when the best of men were the kings, and the kings of men were the best of men. And the men knew life only in its sweet self-contentment, in its profusion of gifts, in its bounteous abundance, so much so, that the tillers of soil were the richest givers; they knew how to labour, to give and to live in the good will of their ever-watching king. Enough, they had plenty of land around to work at, a good number of cattle and every farmer's hut was, in itself, a happy home of peace, prosperity and rustic joy. Every farmer in himself was a little king, and his own heart and home a kingdom. The life in those good old days was spontaneously lyrical and its unceremonious joys gathered in little fairs and festivals around the scattered hamlets and huts, around the camp fires of the jungle-nights, around the simple romance of Truth and its artless naturalness.

The king to the people was a sacred vicegerent of God on earth. The popular imagination fondly invested him with the performance of miracles. He had, undoubtedly, the heaven's authority on his back, for those jewels of genius sparkled on his forehead, whose radiance compelled all moving things to submission. He was an unfailing magic of personality. The people knew him as their protector. With him in their midst, they were safe; the honour of their mothers and daughters and brides was in his keeping. He would hold the scales even, for did he not sit in their eyes holding the scale of justice? To them he was a god who constantly thought of their good and the good of their children's children. In fact, he was their temporal and spiritual master, and their loyalty to him was of the noble rank of prayer and worship and faith and devotion. Death for his sake was a passion with them. His service was their religion. His pleasure was their life, his indifference, death.

In those golden days of rarity of human life, when there was more to give and take than the givers and the receivers thereof; when men met men as the flowers meet each other, laughing and perfuming; when a guest was a gift of heaven as if God himself was on a visit to humble man, a story went round the campfires of the people, that a certain king in the grief of the death of his beloved queen roams in disguise, seeking her in the face of every woman, and feels consoled only when he sees a hundred women faces every day. But the disguise is so perfect and sincere that no one had yet been able to see the king.

One night, in a village about 10 kos from the capital of the kingdom of Anardha, the villagers were welcoming a guest, a Sadhu, an elderly man about forty years old, accompanied by a young disciple. They entered the village when the sun had just set, and it was the fair-day of the Village Blaze. A big fire was lighted, and men and women and children had gathered to sing and to dance around the fire.

The whole village welcomed the guests and every one ran to touch the feet of the Sadhu. And every one said "oh how sweet", as if by touching his feet, they tasted something of exquisite flavour.

The boisterousness of the joy of the assembled crowd changed into grave, respectful silence of a serene rapture. The Sadhu came to the crowd as their night-prayer. All eyes were closed in joy, tears fell and all hearts were filled with ineffable bliss.

The Sadhu sat amidst them, with his young disciple by his side; and the fire burnt before them, and the whole village sat around the Sadhu. The scene was of an open-air temple, whose deity had just been enshrined.

A good while passed thus, when the young disciple said, "Father: what silence of song is descending here tonight; how every thing is full of its sweet rapture! What a beautiful peace lives in this village! How good are these people, they have forgotten themselves in the joy of our coming."

The Sadhu looked up and said, "My son: His Mercy, His Love, His Beauty."

The elders of the village also rose from their inner sanctuary of heart and went forward to stir the fire and to put in a few more logs. And a few housewives had already gone to fetch fresh milk and some had by that time, returned, each with a tiny, shining golden vase of milk, and all placed their offerings before the Sadhu.

The full glare of the red fire fell upon the figure of the Sadhu and his young disciple, and the red reflections of the same light trembled in the dark skimming the heads of the house-wives that sat opposite, while the village boys and girls went hither and thither distributing the red reflections of fire on their waving clothes as so many lights and flashes in this open-air picture of the night scene of this assembly of devotees.

The Sadhu, as he sat, had already bewitched all the women of the village, and they had grown almost lifeless with an unknown kind of attraction for him. His face was that noble mien that is chiselled in aeons, limb by limb, by the immaculate sincerity of one's inner thought unuttered and unformed, and the inner act of virtue, yet unattempted and still undone, by long silent livings of religious aspirations for divine love, seeking no other reward but love everywhere. This angelic beauty of form does not lie in any distinctiveness of mere features but in that supreme grace of unearthly beauty which touching any set of features makes them equally irresistible and invests them with the volatile charm of the fairy; once seen it can never be forgotten, it haunts one's dreams and visions.

In the features of the Sadhu, there was that sparkling subtlety of line and curve, that he did not seem to be a real figure, he looked a dream of the starry sky. His figure though not very tall, even in sitting posture, seemed to be the tallest. His yellow robe covered a faultlessly perfect body and whenever he raised his arm, it seemed to lift a veil from the face of a hidden creation.

In his face blended the Mongolian and the Aryan features in the happiest way, as the blend of these two races has always been fascinating. His raised cheek bones and Tartar expanse of the face reminded one of his being Mongol, but the large eyes, the high nose, the prominent forehead, the long lashes, the half-arch of the black bushy eyebrows, all pointed out that he was an Aryan. The soft bloom of skin and the white hands with tapering fingers betrayed him as a Persian nobleman. The peculiarity of his physiognomy consisted in its universality of shape and in its infinity of colour; amongst Persians, a Persian, amongst Mongols, a Mongol, and amongst Aryans, an Aryan; he was a man of every country and clime and habit.

The young disciple seemed to be his own reflection in a mirror. He looked like his own son, and the father and the son were roaming in the rapture of their own beauty that they saw in each other. The son doted on his father and father on his son. The boy seemed to be the picture of the

younger days of man himself, and it was a delight to look at both the adolescence and the middle age of the same face at one and the same time.

However, the boy's features could have lent half a suspicion to a scrutinising eye that he might be after all a girl!

The homely village talk began and the very first question the villagers put to the Sadhu was of the topic of the day. "Sir, we hear in these days a certain king, in grief of the death of his beloved queen, roams in disguise seeking her in the face of every woman and feels consoled only when he sees a hundred female faces every day. Have you seen him in your rambles?" said a raw, young peasant.

"Ah father, is it not, the man we saw yesterday must be he? He roamed in tattered clothes, bareheaded and bare-footed, looking now at the Sun, then at the women who passed him by with baskets of green vegetables on their heads going from the farm to the market place. He had a tear in his eye, a sigh in his breath and how, pale and soul-starved he looked! And I wondered at his strange behaviour! It must be he. Father!" said the boy.

"Sir! is it not a pity that love causes such wounds even to kings who do not come on this earth like us to be devoted to wives and children and wealth and cattle and home and hearth, but to the performance of their regal duty of protecting the hearths and the honour of the people, providing peace and plenty to them and owning all homes as their home, all people as their children", remarked Saksen, the old man of the village.

"Quite right", said the Sadhu, "but kings must know the wound of humanity before they can heal it. God gives the kings, too, a home and it is that home that comes to every home to fulfil its joy and sorrow. The kings, too, must need endure the pain of love and the sorrows of life as others do. Kings are after all human beings."

"But is it not strange that he is now seeing the faces of other people's wives to cure his pain; it is pity indeed!" said many villagers together.

"But my friends, it is only a story. First of all, no one knows for certain, secondly, a man who wishes to look at one hundred female faces every day before he can set to any work, must have an immense love for his wife, and for him, all female faces must have become sacred. Woman is holy for him. It is his worship. He finds his God in the collective glimpse of a hundred faces. He must be a great king if there is such a one.

Blessed are the people who must be living under his regime for on account of his personal pain, his kingdom must have become Mercy and Love; and by his conquest of self, an absolute justice in itself. In the kingdom of such a man, no one can ever think of hurting another, and the evildoers lose by his very presence on the throne their evil propensities. But a man imbued with so much unselfish love is rare."

"Did I not tell you Janka!" said a villager to another sitting close by him, "that the king can never do wrong."



“But sir,” said Janka, “is not the king an exemplar?” See our king, he too lost his wife when he was quite young. The queen left him a little baby, our princess. But our king bore his private affliction like a hero, brought up the princess who is now in her youth, and the father and the daughter are names which are too sacred to be called by us. Our king could also go about seeing female faces but if he saw a hundred, we will go seeing a thousand; though he may be able to commit no injustice thereby; we might very likely transgress all limits and provoke social anarchy on all sides. What good is it for a king doing things which when taken up by his people might lead to the stirring of chaotic passions of man. Sir, we are thankful to God who has given us a king, a king so pure and simple an ideal of us.”

“My friends! you are quite right. But do your king and your princess ever visit you?”

“Yes Sir”, “The *Sawari* comes in a palanquin and he talks to us, shares our joy and sorrows, and at times, sits to have his meals with us.”

“You, men and women, then see your king and talk to him?” enquired the Sadhu.

“Yes Sir, one and all. He comes just as you have come today and we sit around him and love him and worship him.”

“And your princess?” said the Sadhu.

“She also comes with the king. We adore her as a goddess. Many a time, exactly at this spot, we have assembled around them, and the princess talked to us and her innocent ways are so dear to us. Her name is a charm by which we can cure many diseases and scare away evil spirits”, spoke many villagers together.

“You say, your king lost his wife long ago. How many female-faces, you think, your king must be seeing every day?” put in the Sadhu.

“Thousands Sir”, said the villagers.

“Then how do you say that a king who sees a hundred female-faces to console his grief-stricken heart is not as good a king as your king?” remarked the Sadhu.

“Ah Sir, this is the king seeing his subjects, and that is a man seeing a hundred women every day,” said another villager, and a laughter started at this and all began laughing.

The Sadhu laughed heartily with them and his laughter went capping the wave that had already started till his ringing laughter sank in every heart. The Sadhu enjoyed wholeheartedly this subtle ethical differentiations of unlettered rustics, and changed the topic of the conversation.

“We are the wandering jogis, who have come for a night to your doors. Today happens to be the Festival of the Baize in your village, and seeing the high fire from afar, we left the jungle-shades to come and talk to you.”

“You are welcome. Sir. And we know it is God on a visit to us. It is our good fortune.”

“Drink a little milk. Sir.” said a housewife “it is fresh from our cow” as if she was offering it to a deity.

“Accept this little vase of mine too. Sir” offered another with the feelings of a disciple.

And one by one, in all, a dozen golden vessels full of milk were offered. It looked an assembly of women offering love itself to God. He accepted all the offerings in the same spirit in which they were made.

The night had gone far too long, so one by one, the village-folk retired, and only the sadhu and his disciple were left, and they passed the night around the fire that was kept burning. And the stars glittered in the sky to keep company with them.

“My son! see how great is the people’s devotion to God.” “A Sadhu represents God to them. His presence invokes in them an intense moment of love and they make love-offerings in His name to any Sadhu that comes.”

“But their devotion is short-lived,” said the boy.

“Quite true. Many other things call them. Their homes are so dear to them. They have to work in the fields for the day, so they must have rest at night. Their life is one continuous labour which feeds everyone on this earth. And how good are these people, that they do get a moment of offering their all in God’s Name! Our duty is to bless them when they are all asleep, and taking rest after their day’s labour. When they sleep, we have to wake up and pray for them.”

And here, the Sadhu began chanting in a melodious voice a prayer for the people:

O Lord! Give thy people the joys of their labours!  
And put more grain in the ears of their growing wheat,  
May their children grow-well,  
And there be more milk in the udders of their kine!  
Their bulls be strong and their plough-shares bright,  
Thy peace may rain on their huts and hamlets!  
Thy blessings fall in their dreams,  
And may the kings rule with love and watch with care and protect them from insult and  
injury!

## CHAPTER II

### LOKINA, THE IMAGE OF GOD

The dawn was yet in the mid sky, the Sadhus had gone leaving the last log in the fire half flickering in the white twilight flame of the East, while the tired dancers of the last night were still stretched on their beds.

As the house-wives woke, they rushed to the village stream for a hurried bath in order to hasten to see the Sadhu again. When they came and found him not, they were sorely disappointed.

It seemed to them how cruel were the other callings of their life, how cruel was fatigue and sleep, that lost those two beautiful faces in the interval.

But just then the figure of Sadhu flitted like a flash across the eye of one of them and she cried with joy, "Sister look; there he comes!"

All looked up and saw the Sun was rising in the East!

"O Sisters! What a charm has the visit of that Sadhu thrown all around our village. Today the stream seemed to be talking to us like a human being, so near to the word of man came her sounds", said another, "And how different is the rising of the Sun today, as if he is our brother", said the third, "The wheat fields wave with joy and the ears seem to be bending with the increased weight of grain in them" said the fourth, "And how the wheat fields seem to be full of the glad song of the morning breeze," said a young girl.

"Look! Ah look! how the ripe wheat is kissed by the rising Sun and how the lithesome waist of wheat is bending with the weight of his love and her joy," said a merry housewife.

"The very spot he sat seems to be full of a hundred figures of his; he is crowding it and his boy is all over. They seem to be seated everywhere here. The village is blessed forever. Our village has become a Temple of God," said yet another.

"But how great was the last night, how dew-filled was our slumber. What beautiful dreams crowded on our pillow," said a new bride.

"Sisters, what you say happens only when a Man of God visits us or our king. After such visits, we love each other more, we love our imperfections also. And we grow kind and sweet," said a middle-aged and kind-hearted lady.

"Our men do not know, these visits are the secrets of our life. They fill the ears of our wheat with more corn, and make our cows give more milk and the red colour of life returns to the cheeks of our boys and girls," said an old woman of the village whose eyes brightened up and whose forehead sparkled suddenly with the joy of her own great knowledge.

“True! Mother! It is quite true! Without the blessings of the Sadhu, and the good intentions of king, how can we poor people make two ends meet!” said one of these thoughtful young women, establishing thus a ring of remarks that circled round in a delightful flow.

“Have you not heard the stories of a Sadhu distributing one bread to thousands of men and making it sufficient enough to last for all,” said a tall thin, peasant woman.

“Miracles are great, but the greatest is this bestowal of peace on our hearth and home, and making us love each other more, still more.”

“How has the visit of this Sadhu kindled in our eyes the passion for the things around us, and we now see a brother in the Sun and a sister in the stream. Is this not a miracle?”

“We gave just a draught of milk to the Sadhu, a thing we give every day to ourselves, our children, our husbands, and in return, how great is the gift of the Sadhu! Only it has no name, no odour, no shape. It is love that blesses and forgives. What miracle could be greater than a king thought of one who can work such a change in our minds while we were all asleep having forgotten him by the side of a burning log,” said again the dreamy young girl whose face flushed as she said it with an effort, and her bosom heaved full with passion.

“Well said! Kindness is the same, but it is a miracle in the hands of a Sadhu and a king, and a simple act of goodness in our hands, and even that act goes seeking returns of itself from everywhere!”

By this time, the Sun had come high up and the assembly dispersed, going to their morning work.

Only that young girl remained who had spoken last and twice in all, self-fettered to the spot where the Sadhu had sat last night.

When all had gone, she sat down with her eyes closed. Her face glowed with the fire of a hundred red roses and the light of the Sun fell upon it. Her cheeks rose and her face expanded, and for a moment. She was transfigured. In her face shone the face of the Sadhu, and if one were to see her face then, one could see the Sadhu sitting again on the very spot, though this time, not on bare earth, but in the heart of the girl, and the girl was full of him. The girl for the moment was wholly in him. His blended Mongolian and Aryan face was in such perfect reflection in the transparent face of that intense emotion. From the closed eyes of the girl in prayer trickled two large bead-like tears! So blissful was the thought of Him! And the unlettered girl had, as if it were, caught the light of the wisdom of ages in one night, in her soul!

Thus had the Sadhu left his image of God in the village, and thenceforward the village was safe in the love and wisdom and silence and Dhyanam of this girl-saint.

The whole village slowly recognised this transformation, and Lokina, for this was her name, held daily discourses, and sang hymns of praise. In the ring of this holy chanting, the sick that came were healed, the distressed comforted, and the restlessness of mind was cured.

Life of the village became, day by day, sweeter, calmer, and stabler and happier, and the village and its fields and its labour were bathed in the inner ecstasy of the song, and every one felt supremely rich in needing nothing.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRINCESS PRAKASINA

The king of Anardha had lost his beloved queen at the birth of the first child, a girl, and he was sorely afflicted thereby. The loss had caused a vacuum in the deeper recesses of his heart that nothing of his kingdom and kingship could fill. It was an inner loneliness that drove him many a time into frantic frenzies. The little baby was there being brought up by her nursing mother, but he would not see her, as this increased his grief. For most of the time, he kept alone.

The only thing that went a great way to relieve him was to roam disguised in crowds, in fairs, in crowded streets, casting his blank looks on human faces. As a king, he could seldom find time for obtaining this relief in his own kingdom, but he would announce that he was going on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas all alone, and would ask his Minister to look after the affairs of the Government. He would go a great distance out of his kingdom and send back the servants accompanying him to Anardha, saying he would like to go to the sacred places like an ordinary man and not as a king. And, thus, he would lead his people to believe that he was out on a long pilgrimage, but spent month after month roaming his own kingdom as a Sadhu in ever-changing colour and garb, coming in close contact with the people, conversing with them, enlightening them and improving their outlooks on life by his own contact.

These wanderings alone relieved him of his grief. The whole kingdom of Anardha was contact-educated by years' long wanderings of the king.

Years sped and the little baby grew to be a girl and a Princess of exquisite beauty. She was the delight of the king Jasmanji of Anardha, and the light of the palace. Her presence was a shower of smiles. Wherever she stood or sat or went, the smiles fell like bestrewn flowers everywhere. She was joy incarnate and, in her presence, no one could remain sad or ill. Soon her name became a spell all over the kingdom for curing little children of their ailments.

“Princess Prakasina” was a name on the lip of everyone and with this name soon gathered a thousand folk associations. Wherever the king went, he would take the young Princess with him. Great was the rejoicing of the people, and for a glimpse of the Princess Prakasina, they would be willing to make any sacrifice. The whole kingdom adored their king and their beautiful Princess.

The king was no longer young and his pilgrimages were also not as frequent. Besides the Princess Prakasina filled his life and thought, and he needed no more to roam about. But the charm of the life of a wandering Sadhu could not fade away from his mind. The king occasionally stole out for many a day with the Princess disguised as a boy-disciple to see the life and labour of his people, and the Princess Prakasina loved to roam with her father and help him by her clever wit, to make the disguise all the more complete.

Princess Prakasina sympathised so deeply with the life and thought of her father that she was actually a devotee and a disciple.

The king Jasmanji was a saint, an adept, a man of God and a servant of people and then anything else. Ever since his boyhood, his father had initiated him into the mysteries of God-

knowledge and its methods of the practice of His presence. Though the parents left him, while he was still in his teens, this initiation had rendered him mature enough to take up the duties of kingship while still a tender youth.

The only event which came to him as an unknown sensation and a new knowledge of life was his marriage, and a few years of felicity of his married life. The blow inflicted on him by the death of his queen was extremely severe, that it took the whole of his remaining life for its healing up. The gods on high sustained him through many experiences and kept him in the full glare of the Divine Light that was set aglowing in his heart by his father.

In those days, the kings were the owners of the secrets of life and these were bequeathed from father to son. And that is why, the kings had a hold on the popular imagination. In the personality of the king, all human problems found an easy solution.

The king was both the master and the servant of the people, he kept waking life-long on the watchtower, protecting his people from all ills, while they slept.

It was one of these latter day excursions in which the king and the Princess Prakasina appeared one night in a village near the Capital- Anardha.

## CHAPTER IV

### THOUGHT BODIES

The Princess Prakasina had learnt from her father the secret of personality and was by then the future custodian of the hereditary sacred knowledge. The King had lighted during his long tours many a lamp and had made many a home happy. The country was, then, in his ripe age, full both of material prosperity and inner happiness and peace; it was self-sufficient and truly independent. The King had lifted the whole country and gave new eyes to it to see the glory of being everywhere.

There were no fueds, no litigation, no thefts, no usurpation of other peoples' property, land or wife, and consequently the expenditure on the administration of the country was ridiculously low so that the people had to pay little for the upkeep of the Government with the King as their head.

The King of Anardha had developed his own theory of State and he had put it to test during his life time and made it a success. He trained the Princess Prakasina exactly as he wished and made her as fit as himself to carry on the work started by him.

“If we bum like a lamp, my daughter, the moths would of their own accord gather in mad love around us. It is by making ourselves inwardly great and real and true that we become the object of desire for the whole world. Keep this light of your ancestors burning in your bosom and your word shall make those conquests of which no one has yet heard. You will be able to elevate slaves as kings by your very look, by your unuttered thought. Your prayers will lighten the burdens of the world. In you, the weary and heavy laden would find their rest. To you the world would fain trust its life. In you they would love to live, and perpetuate themselves.”

As he was talking thus, he suddenly stopped speaking, his eyes closed, his face brightened up into a burning flame of fire, and on his orange cheeks trickled two large beads of tears, and he shivered with emotion from head to foot. He sat thus for a long while. When his eyes opened, he saw Princess Prakasina seated before him in exactly the same posture, her eyes too were closed and tears were rolling down her cheeks, drop by drop, and her face shone like a golden orb in the blue sky. And as she had light blue dress on, it was a scene of divine beauty which reminded the King of many beautiful scenes. He sat looking at the face of his daughter thanking God for His goodness, and remembering her divine mother. Hours passed and the Princess was in her rapturous silence. The father also sat looking at her with wonder and affection of a father, a teacher, a sculptor and a creator.

As she opened her eyes, she said, “Father! I saw the village which we visited the other night, and in the village I saw no one but a young girl who seated exactly where we sat, and she rose as I went and embraced me; and with tears trickling from her eyes she said, “Where is father?” No sooner her words were uttered then I saw her falling at thy feet and I saw you raising her to thy bosom and comforting her.”

“Quite right, daughter! Today, that divine disciple has been thinking intensely of us both, and her meditation took us there. We both did actually go there and all that you have seen has actually happened in the physical world also, but only in the eyes of that girl. No one else has seen us.



The girl has come to know today that she met the king and the Princess in that disguise of a Sadhu and she has today recognised us, both you and me. She knows it all now. And great will be her joy when you will go with me next to that village as the Princess of Anardha. She will recognise the Sadhu and the boy-disciple in us, but the sacredness of our inner meditation would seal the secret in her bosom of love in a way that no one else will be able to read it. But what I have told you just now will be clear to you, by a heart to heart process, by her very looks at us, of deep affectionate familiarity and other signs that would show that she knows your and my disguise by this time.”

“Father! You must have made many hearts of this country burn with this divine love and all living ones must be craving for thee,” said Prakasina.

“Yes, my child! but I crave more for them, and meet them in Dhyanam. They all have come to know the Sadhu as their King, but all those who know my secret keep it to themselves for they try to conceal its sacredness. The day will come when every one would know of it, but till today, only those who yearn for God know the Sadhu as their King.”

“But father! Their love is so personal, how would they stand your going away to the Himalayas for ever, as you told me you are thinking of doing it soon, and that the time was fast approaching for it. What will these ardent devotees of your do then?” said Prakasina.

“My child! Haven’t you seen how their Dhyanam has discovered that the Sadhu was their King? The form or disguise of a Sadhu could not cloud their vision. Because whenever they thought of the Sadhu, they saw the King Jasmanji of Anardha. They wished to forget the King’s figure and see their Sadhu, but they always failed to see the Sadhu, they saw only the King. They, therefore, have felt convinced that the Sadhu was no other but their King in disguise. Similarly, when I go to the Himalayas, I would live in thee and whenever they will try to think of me, they will see thee. They will again try to change their Dhyanam, but every time they will see me only in thy figure and form. It is thus that they will always see me in thee. And just as the figure of the Sadhu was not the real object of their devotion, but the reality concealed in the guise of the Sadhu, so their Dhyanam will convince them that I am still amidst them in the form of my daughter, the Princess Prakasina. They will not be grieved. The people whose Dhyanam is firmly fixed on me, crave for *me* and not for my disguise.

“Further, the form of the king that appears to them would be no comfort to them if it did not produce the same spiritual effect and atmosphere as the presence and the touch of the Sadhu does. The repetition of the same atmosphere of the presence of the Sadhu by the presence of the figure of the King convinces them of my presence with them. And by a similar inner process they will find me in thee, and know that the *man* never dies. As to forms, just as they forgot the one of the Sadhu, they will forget the other of the King also.”

“And this is how the comfort of the God-love is sustained from generation to generation, father!” said Prakasina.

“Yes, my child! There is no pain acuter and no love more painful than that of a disciple for his Beloved, the giver of the inner vision of love and peace and Dhyanam. At the same time, there is no joy sweeter than his ecstasy, and no relation more deeply personal than this? Therefore it

requires all the more subtle and varied response. You might have heard in the old Myths of God how Vishnoo ran bare-footed to save the elephant who prayed to him when caught by an alligator. And how Krishna helped Draupadi. God's response to his devotees is, of all things the most immediate, most personal and most motherlike. It has to be, it cannot be otherwise. Faith is the gratitude of human beings for His persistent, unerring, ever-watchful Love which they received in infinite abundance. He gives so much that they find no vessels to hold it and overflows their being and flows waste in sands".

"My child! people only talk of love, but know it not. It is the touch of God in man. This Dhyanam of the village girl is love that has perforce drawn us both there. One thought of love has bathed us three in this supreme joy, the like of which is to be found nowhere else but in ourselves. This is the true prayer in whose continuous music one lives, moves and has his being. One cannot drop himself out of its melody, a work, asleep or awake, he is driven to be in it. All his pores are bathed in its nectar. It is freshness of youth, it is juice of life itself. I wonder how can people live outside of this prayer. I fail to understand how people can think of praying at some fixed times as if the prayer is not the very breath of our life. Daughter! how can one breathe without it. A moment out of it makes me cry like a fish taken out of water. This is love."

"Father! let us go tomorrow on an official visit to this village and see that beautiful devotee of God for she is longing to see us. I feel the beat of her bosom in mine, and her yearning looks in my looks. My breath is getting choked with her sighs and throat with her tears. I have just seen her flitting before my eyes, like a flash, a tall, beautiful peasant girl with a little squint in her left eye. Her face seems remarkably like yours, father!"

"No daughter. Her face is oval, cherb-like with a hundred rippling smiles playing upon it. It seems such a face could never be sad, it was never made for sadness. As she is thinking of me intensely, it is the reflection of my form in hers that you have caught at this moment in the flash flitting across your vision. It is her intense love super-imposes, at times, my features on her features physically and at these times she would be actually resembling me. Her voice would be exactly like mine, her gait, her posture of the body, the raising of her arms will be like mine. To herself, at times she would seem to be a man! This intermingling of souls in Dhyanam is what makes man cognizant of each other.

And as this very power of *thinking* develops, one hears the unheard, sees the unseen. And he talks of other worlds which no one else can understand."

"Father! Tomorrow then we go," said Prakasina.

"All right daughter! we will," said the King.

## CHAPTER V

### THE KING'S VISIT

The village, Sangra, where the saint-girl Lokina was leading her life of intense devotion and rich lyrical concentration was situated at the base of a blue hillock at the foot of which there flowed a thin, little streamlet. The Sangra was a kind of model village of the Kingdom of Anardha. The villagers had that inborn sense of co-operative labour, the whole village was one in helping anyone of themselves in trouble. If anyone of them needed a hundred labourers one day, they would all give up their work and come and do one man's work that day and so on, turn by turn, every one got the benefit of a whole village and the whole village of one man. On social occasions, like marriages and deaths, they all contributed both in money and in kind. Behind this co-operative life was the spirit of the king. Unselfishness combined with active labour of love came to them gradually by their devotion to the king. This training was given to them by a long and gradual process as of Self-realisation in which came and mingled many a miracle and a super-natural vision of the King. And owing to this deep religious conviction the people gave personal interpretation to most of the ordinary events and coincidences of life as *Karma*. If any one sought to be selfish, he found, for example, that he suddenly lost a cow, or a tiger took away his lamb, or his harvest yielded much less to him than it yielded to others. Any wave of ill-will that came invisibly in his mind brought in its train sickness for his children. If he misappropriated anybody else's labour without the latter's knowledge, so transparent was his susceptibility, that he immediately saw it in the form of loss to himself in another shape. Coincidents such as these were found to come about so with the kind of intention one harboured, that at bayonet's point, all ill-will had gradually and slowly to give place to love for each other and love's labour for each other. At extreme moments, some of them, at times, caught in their own net of evil intentions, would see the figure of the King, appearing in their dreams and saying to them: "Your child is not ill, its illness is the changed shape of your own bad thought, or ill-will or hatred that you have harboured against such and such. Go and beg his pardon and confess to him, and immediately your child would get well."

By such ecstasies, the king had trained his people at the expense of his own flesh and blood. So universal was this training, that the kingdom of Anardha had then become an harmonious conglomeration of such saintly villages, that sparkled with the love and inspiration of the King.

The inhabitants of Anardha village had also found that the inner atmosphere of mind was poisoned by indolence and therefore no one for the sake of maintaining his inner loveliness, ever could afford to pass an idle moment. With incessant labour in the fields, lighted by the lilt of the hymns of Divine praise, they plodded on with their hands on their ploughs, day and night, singing and thanking God for having made their minds so beautiful and so susceptible to the beauties of the absolute virtue of love and labour.

It was summer. The sun had just started declining. The women of Sangra began gathering under the thick shade of a banyan tree for their afternoon meeting with the goddess of the village, the saint Lokina.

The villagers were by this time satisfied that Lokina was no more a girl, but an abode of God where He Himself dwelt. Her body was a temple and by touching the dust trod by her, they touched the feet of God Himself. Lokina was thus the living temple of the village.

It may not be out of place here to say that in the whole kingdom of Anardha, all other old temples were deserted, each village, each town and each city had its own living temples like Lokina. Human body where dwelt inspiration of God's love was the most sacred Temple for the people of Anardha.

They knew by persistent uniformity of the objective results of their subjective states of mind, that the inspiration of God, like His mind and water and light, makes no distinction between man and woman, the low and the high, and hence, there was by universal consent of people, a free choice of calling allowed equally to man and woman, and no customary compulsion of any kind was forced on any citizen of this kingdom. Every one, son, daughter, man and woman, was free to choose his or her own ways of self-development. This training by the inner experiences had also eradicated once for all the differences between man and woman, low or high. Like new moon every one was welcome everywhere.

The villages and the towns flung their arms in open embrace to receive all children of God with equal delight and affection.

Due to this mental habit, Lokina was not pestered by the villagers with pressure of any kind or with the usual human don'ts. She used to go and labour in the fields and live with her parents just like other people.

She could not be distinguished from the rest of them by any extraordinariness of her dress, her pose, or of her own manners. If anything, she looked humbler, simpler, more rustic and opener in her deportment than the rest of them. Only they all, instinctively, saw the village Temple in her, and they knew her destiny by the strange colours of the glow of inspiration that came on her.

Her inspired face was her only distinction from the rest of them, an angelic deeper jet-black shade flitting in the black of her eyes, as if another seraphic eye was invisibly coming and looking through it. The wonderful transparency of her forehead, the snow like purity of her glowing temples, these and not the clothes or any robes of honour, of which she had none, made her different from the rest. In outward appearance Lokina was a simple village maiden like a hundred others.

The women had taken their seats under the banyan tree. Lokina came and sat amidst them on a mat spread for her.

As she sat, the whole audience was thrilled; a quiver of joy went round. The hair of everyone stood at ends, their eyes closed and tears of joy fell down without their knowing or without any previous emotional preparation on their part. It was a state of mind come suddenly to them, as one feels tear-bedewed joy at the meeting of a long parted friend. The women, the girls and the village boys all were caught unaware by this ecstasy. And mist them sat Lokina with her eyes closed, her body resonant with song. Her heart throbbed in this deep silence, keeping time with the song of love that was resounding in the very flow of her blood.

After a while, Lokina opened her eyes and looked around; all eyes of the village greeted her look with that mute joy in their eyes, the like of which one sees in the freshly opened eyes of the

morning flowers waking after the night's rest. For a while, it was nothing but the quiet greeting of eyes.

Lokina said: "Is not today a great day? Today the King of Anardha and the Princess Prakasina will visit us."

Suddenly another thrill and another quiver galvanised the audience with the throat-choking joy. Again and again, the eyes would faintly close in joy.

"Devi! O Goddess! I wonder how you know they are coming," said a girl.

"Sister! It is no omniscience on my part, it is as clear as you and I are meeting now. You are known to me by your own set of features, voice, gait, colour, and sound and silence of your being. In the dark, if you meet me, your very breathing, your being there would tell me who you are, provided I am once familiar with you. The same way you recognise the sound of the very steps of your brothers. Exactly in the same way, the King of Anardha meets us, and he meets his slaves long before his physical meeting. We live in bodies, he lives in mind, and it is his mental state that hath just come suddenly upon me and you; this is his body, and he is known by this and this alone. It is his kindness that he comes and sees us in the body of the King also, but his real body is this and whenever you and I feel, whether in company or in solitude, like this, it is certain, we meet the King."

A shout of joy rose from the fields and the farmers of Sangara left the ploughs and ran to the pathway for there stood two horses bearing the King Jasmanji and Princess Prakasina. They had just come and were on their way back to the Capital. The old women also ran like young girls to greet the king.

And behind all, stood, on the roadside waiting for the King and his daughter, Lokina fluttering like a wounded dove.

The *Sawari* came and both the King and the Princess got down, and the horses were taken by two villagers who began looking after them. The Princess Prakasina playfully talking with all girls, meeting every one of the women assembled, talking a word to one, touching another and smiling at the third, went behind and embraced Lokina and stroking her cheeks with her palms she said in a soft whisper, "So you, you are the one, the Beloved of the Sadhu." The last word was almost inaudible except to Lokina.

"No Princess, no, beloved of the King!" whispered softly Lokina in the ear of the Princess.

"So you have called us all the way, you naughty girl." said the Princess.

"It is the mercy of the King, you are here! How can a poor, illiterate village girl dare pray for a glimpse of her king?" said Lokina.

"Lokina! Lokina! this name was on my lips as we sat looking in the direction of this village," said the Princess.

"It is the king's love, his mercy," said Lokina.

By this time, the assembled people had provided a seat of honour for the king and, near Lokina, another for the Princess.

All sat around him, and amidst the women sat the Princess, and at the feet of the Princess sat Lokina, resting her head on the Princess's knee. The Princess was soothing her long black tresses, with her hand going over them in a gentle wave. The shy Lokina, lifting her eyes from under the eyelids, with her head unmoved from the Princess's knee, would now and then look at the King and more than once their eyes met and talked and understood what was known to them alone. One flying glance from the King gave solace to her soul, and she was satiated for a while. The feelings of separation from the Lord would not torment Lokina the way it had done till then.

The King was talking to the villagers: "Friends! see how your goodness has made the policy unnecessary and the cost of running my Government for your sake has gone down on all sides; you now manage all your affairs so well by yourselves. You settle your own disputes in your own way, and how good it is that the disputants abide by the judgement of the elders of the village. You have to spend nothing of your hard earned money in seeking justice at other people's hands, when God has enshrined the whole of justice in your own hearts. As litigation is non-existent, many of the officials of this State have taken to farming. The only department that is reinforced is the military which is centralised in your king; all the civil departmental work has been decentralised into villages that govern themselves and the people manage their own affairs. This is a great solace to your king and he works for you with increased joy both as your king, your minister of the State and your commander-in-chief. It is essential that your king should have a very effective fence around the garden of roses that this country of Anardha has become with your goodness, hard work and virtue. The more developed a State is in its moral life, the greater is the need for the defence of its peace lest it is threatened from outside. And therefore your king insists on a strong military force. So with your consent, he has ruled that every man of Anardha between the age of nineteen and twenty three, should undergo military training for five years at the State expense and this would form your own protecting militia. So you will see that your Government is the cheapest for you on account of your goodwill to each other, your unity, your love and hard work, your cordial spirit of co-operative labour. And your King's ancestral treasury too is for you and you alone in times of need, it is held as your trust by your King for you."

"No, no sir!" said all the villagers together; "it is our King who has guided us, inspired us, and made us fit for this kind of village and the city government. We are but common villagers, full of all kinds of mean tendencies, it is our king who has elevated our hearts, made us work hard and love. It is entirely due to the moral reflection of the life of our King on us and the change of heart brought in us that we are today what we are. The King has made us happy and has made us the conscious owners of the fruits of our own labours by binding us together in this hitherto unknown and still unnamed spirit of comradeship that makes us pool our labours amongst ourselves."

"Long live the King! Long live the Princess!" cried all. By this time the King had risen to go, but all stood looking at the two statue-like figures that by that time had fallen deep into ecstasy. The Princess Prakasina's hand was still on Lokina's head and Lokina lay still with her head on the Princess's knee. No one disturbed them, the King stood waiting. A long while passed thus before they woke.

The Princess got on to her horse and the King on to his own, and with the whole village in them in the figure of Lokina and they both in the figure of Lokina in the village, galloped away towards the Capital.

## CHAPTER VI

### MANMAHAJI

The winter sun had just touched the tower of the palace of Anardha, and bathed it in golden waters of the sky, when the Princess Prakasina dressed in the gorgeous gold brocade gown of light blue colour, with a jacket to match, and a red silk handkerchief covering her head long black tresses, entered into the King's room. Its windows were flung wide open to welcome the visitors of Heaven that streamed into it with the rays of the Sun. As the Princess entered, it appeared a thousand angels of light came and gathered round her, and each stuck a miniature sun in every gold thread of her beautiful garment. She shone standing in the middle of her father's room with the splendour of hundred suns, the room reflected her glory before which, the sunlight fell ashamed. The father rose to welcome his divine daughter and embraced her.

“Father!” enquired she, “I wonder what was it this morning that happened to me? Today when I woke, my tongue was vibrating with a name of which I know nothing. *Manmahaji*, *Manmahaji*, was on my tongue. I tried to repeat the hymn you had taught me, but after a few moments' conscious effort I found again I was repeating *Manmahaji*, *Manmahaji*”.

“My daughter! some time it does happen that way, you need not worry about it. This morning as I woke, I saw coming before the Sun, out in Heaven a splendid figure, a young man with large liquid, captivating eyes, a broad forehead of immaculate purity looking at which I thought I was contemplating on moonlit virgin snows. His arching eyebrows fascinated me for a long while, and so rich was his beauty that it was with an effort that my eyes could travel from one feature of his face to another. My eyes would be caught now in the flowers that blossomed round his temples, then in those round his ears. I gazed long at the long cranny nape of his neck, at his wing-like slightly raised shoulders. He was of the colour of the sky, so it was difficult to distinguish him. He appeared before me and disappeared, as the light and shade caused by his own steps made him visible to me. The vision kept me wonder-bound the whole of this morning, and as he disappeared from my sight, the name that was on your tongue was also on mine. Great people help in various ways and so you need not feel very curious about this name. He must be some great dweller of the sky.”

“But father! today is the Fair Day of the whole kingdom of Anardha and people will gather from all parts, displaying their skill in arts, industry, sports and crafts. I hope all arrangements for their reception are made,” said Prakasina.

“Yes my child! we have to go there just now and meet them,” said the king.

“I am dressed up already.” said Prakasina, “Father, put on your disguise of king of Anardha and let us go.”

The Maidan grounds of the Capital were full of people. They were flooded humanity, it flowed from one corner to the other like a river of moving heads.



A shout rose! “Jai Jasman Raja! Jai Prakasina Rajkumari!! And this human sea began ebbing towards the East, from which direction the King and the Princess entered through a high arch of Welcome that the people had erected for the reception of their Beloved Sovereign.

The King and the Princess were then carried by the crowds midst vociferous shouts of “*Jai Jai*,” which frequently broke into a tumult and a tempest. The people in their frenzy pulled down all embankments to flow free to the feet of the King and the Princess.

The rivers of the crowds became calm and settled. Seated on the brown dried grass of the *Maidan*, hundred of them in their blue dresses and the crimson handkerchiefs covering their heads seemed like so many red lotus flowers emerging out of the waters of a lake. The sun blew its genial breath of gold on the surfaces of things and everything glowed with golden colours. The King and the Princess sat on mats spread on a raised dais under a light red-silk canopy spread for them.

Every thing became still and calm as the King looked at them; the crowds fell into a trance. Their eyes closed of themselves in an ineffable peace, the tears dropped like strings of pearls from all eyes, and the whole disciple-community was bathed in holiness of God. Their flesh was singing hallelujahs and their souls were on wings in the Blue Heavens. Every one sat before the King as a statue from whose closed eyes, ecstasy seemed to flow. The Princess fell into a deep Trance, and last of all the King. Thus did the people meet their King. They lost their senses in the excess of joy and had a dip into the infinite.

As they woke and opened their eyes one by one, the King was seen sitting under the red canopy like a statue of gold on which the Sun shone, the glow on his face dazzled every eye. No one could look at him fully. After a long spell, the King broke his Samadhi, and then the Princess. Every one of the assembly felt so light as if having bodies they had no bodies. The people saw again today, how the inner touch of the Master-consciousness washes the consciousness of his disciples from within and what great difference there was in his washing it and their doing so. And there was a difference even between lightness and lightness, purity and purity, peace and peace, one which they found in his glance and the other which they always found in their own effort.

In this general assembly of the people were also gathered men and women of the Lokina's type, who had been invited by the King. And there was Lokina too. And each village and each town of the kingdom chose these men and women as their representatives to receive the blessings of the King, and to lay at his feet their own offerings on their behalf. Quivering with amours of hundred kings, pulsating with a myriad feelings of devotion, rose one by one these representatives, came and placed at the King's feet the people's offerings. The King talked to every one and introduced each to the Princess Prakasina. Every one fell and kissed the ground before the Princess.

The King, then asked the news of the Kingdom. Upon this an old man, the inhabitant of the village, Gangola, got up. He seemed to be a red flame in white clouds of his snow white tresses that fell down from his head all round his neck, and over them a red handkerchief flew like a ribbon round his head. The whole community, assembled that day, had the same appearance. Men and women all had long hair that fell all about their necks and shoulders and a red handkerchief, as mentioned above, covered them. The beards were also unkempt and the faces were set off like gems resting in rocks. The uniformity of the type of long tresses, unkempt beards, and the blue dresses, and the red handkerchiefs lent a distinctive charm to the people of this kingdom.

All eyes turned towards the old man as he began with folded hands; "Sire! the bird of my soul is longing for its own nest in the Heavens, that it has just seen, and soon shall it fly from this branch of the old tree on which it is still perching. It is spreading its wings and the balancing of its weight for the flight is being felt within all over me from top to toe. A little while more, and the bird would have soared away. And I have to relate a story which is sacred. I make over its secret in this assembly with the King, though I have nursed it long in secret, and the keeping of this secret was also a part of the sacred service. Years ago, a young girl came late at night to my house and sought shelter which in the name of the King of Anardha was given her by this humble servant of the King. At her own express wish, I kept her concealed in my little house for about five months. She gave birth to a male child and died after a month or so from complications incidental to the first child birth. She was a remarkable lady. Day and night she was heard singing a song whose carole and lilt we did only catch, for it was in a language of which we understood not a syllable. She worked hard and was never seen sleeping. During the day she worked like other women of my family, and at night she gazed at stars, sitting in Padma-asan. Her touch was alchemical, it healed people's minds as well as bodies. She performed miracles every day but in so simple a manner that we thought it was a thing which every one could do. She cast spell of self-concealment of herself on us. Once she told a village girl, "come little Mahina! I will make you a musician," And she took her on her knee and sang her own strange song and touched her forehead and said, "Go, you are a musician." In our village, that little Mahina has now grown to be a great songster, and music flows from her as naturally as speech from others. When she sings now, she holds the moving winds and waters in the spell of her notes. The genius so blessed by her, is today with me and I wish to present her to this assembly of the representatives of the Anardha Kingdom."

At this a young girl got up, a tall and thin figure of womanly grace, and walked forward in deep music of her being to the King, and met the Princess Prakasina. The King greeted her with a smile which she responded with a bow, and the Princess Prakasina made her sit by her there and then. Her very gait set many a people present wave their heads in rhythm of a song unsung. Mahina was music itself.

The old man continued, "Sire! she was a lady of wonderful gifts which she gave away to the village folks as if they were Material things. One day, she gave authority to a young man of our village to heal the sick, and from that day there is cure in his word. We never use any drugs; his word heals all our ills and the ills of our children.

"But of herself she never told us, who she was, whence she came, how she came that way, and what was the secret song she always was found singing, awoke, awake or asleep, and what was her language and where was her country. She was snow-white in colour, red and fragrant like a new born rose, and rather stout. She wore a flowing robe, worn so dexterously that it covered her entire body, excepting her arms up to the elbow, and her feet up to the ankles. She talked with us in our language, but her accent was that of a foreigner. Once came a Chinese traveller to look at the old Buddhistic hills near our village, and he was struck by her speaking to him in Chinese and telling where he would find what he was seeking, and she gave an entire chapter of the old history to him, which he took down. But she did all this with such an ease that no one, not even the Chinaman, could think that she was extraordinary. He might have, on the other hand, thought that it was the result of her long historical studies. And she was so young, hardly about twenty five when she gave up her body."

“She once told me that she had left her far off home in search of the King of Anardha whose name and fragrance she got in her dreams, and it was after some years of hard and perilous travel that she had reached this place. I promised that I would take her to the King. On my saying this, she looked up towards the sky and blushed; her eyes closed and two tears trickled down her orange cheeks and said, “Not I but the one I bear is destined to see the King.” And after a while she continued, “Take him to the King when he is of eighteen years. Till then tell no one of me or of my son who is about to be born.” She also added, “Name my little child when he grows up- Manmaha.”

She is no more with us, but we have brought up her baby in the name of the King, and today I wish to present to the king the boy whose age is now eighteen years, for she had said, “Not I but the one I bear is destined to see the King.”

At this the boy got up and went forward to the King and fell at his feet. The King lifted him and embraced him and asked him with “motherly” affection, “What is your name, my child?” “I am called, Manmaha, Sire!”

The Princess Prakasina startled a bit and fluttered like a white dove. She was just gathering the ruffled wings of her thought, when the young man advanced towards the Princess and kissed the ground before her feet. As he rose up, the Princess Prakasina said, “So you are Manmahaji! Manmahaji! You are welcome to the adopted country of your mother.”

This sentence went deep into the heart of Manmahaji and, not a little giddy with joy, he reeled back to his seat dazzled by the electric glow of the smile of the Princess Prakasina, the smile which she had offered to him in a manner as if a handful of white jasmine blossoms was showered on him. He felt as if with one smile of hers, she had elevated him; he knew not where he was on the earth or in the heaven. He lost his foothold and began swimming in deep blue waters of the sky, splashing the waters with his hands and feet to keep his head up.

“He is quite after his mother, sire! and resembles her in all details,” said the old man.

The King had got up to go and see the sports of the people according to the programme and with him went the chosen saints of Anardha. The Princess took another direction and she was accompanied by Mohina and Lokina.

“Sisters! what would you say if I ask you to stay with me in the palace from now onward. I had all along felt quite well by myself, but from this moment, I feel I should request you to stay with me,” said Prakasina.

“Dear Princess! What could be more welcome for us than to be commanded to keep company with you,” said Lokina; while Mahina looked straight in the face of the Princess and smiled.

The Princess Prakasina frowned a bit and then gave a gentle slap on the back of Mahina and said, “Sister Mahina! you are so cruel.”

“Dear Princess! I know the cause of your trepidation of heart. You have turned all pale and it is not the first day you have left the King alone and sought solitude of your own?” said Mahina.

“No sister! I don’t know what is the matter with me, as I have never felt this sensation before. It is painful to me, my every limb is quivering, my heart throbs like a hammer within me. And I am perspiring,” said Prakasina.

“Dear Princess! You need not be afraid. It is the fatigue of seeing so many people all at once,” said Lokina, “and it will soon be cured. Let us sit here in the shade. The sun, too, has grown hot.”

Princess Prakasina involuntarily heaved a gentle sigh and said, “Ah! who must be sighing after me? My breath is getting choked with some one’s sighs.”

“Perhaps it is the thought of that lady, the mother of Manmahaji, let us think something else,” said Lokina.

“Ah! there is she! I see there the mother,” said the Princess and the name Albita! Albita! was involuntarily on her lips. Princess Prakasina gave an insane look around and still repeated the name Albita! Albita! Albita!

“Princess! compose yourself and be calm,” said Mahina, but she saw the figure of the mother of Manmahaji so vividly in the face of the Princess herself, that it took her breath away with wonder.

The Princess was transfigured. So did also Lokina see, and both Mahina and she were wonder-struck for a while.

After a while the Princess came back to herself and smiled. She was as red and fresh as the morning rose. Perfumes flew about her and she threw back her curled tresses that had fallen over her eyes in this confusion. Her forehead sparkled again like the crystalline snowy peaks in the Sun!

Mahina too was singing, Albita! Albita! Albita! and had by this time gone into a trance of music.

And the very same name was on the tongue of Lokina in a similar rhythm.

The Princess got up to join the King who was coming that way and Mahina and Lokina kept a little behind.

“Daughters mine, Lokina and Mahina!” said the King advancing towards them, “I wish you keep company with Prakasina She is not looking well. Please accompany her to the different scenes and show her all round, I would leave her in your charge,” said the King and embraced Prakasina and left her with her companions.

At one place on that Manmahaji was displaying his martial skill, and it so happened that at the very first, the Princess came with her companions to that very spot. She saw one or two games and then wished to go.

“Come, Mahina and Lokina! we will go and see other games,” said she.

The Princess Prakasina was again suffering from a nervous tremor, her colour left her face, and she was pale and livid, her lips were trembling and cold. The tips of her fingers were icy to the touch of Lokina who was very much concerned over her sudden and strange indisposition that seemed to return.

Mahina, however, looked at the Princess again in the face, and smiled faintly.

Prakasina again gave her a gentle slap on her back and said, "If you behave always so cruelly, I would not speak to you."

Mahina laughed heartily and said, "The Princess has other thoughts than those that can think of us, the poor villagers."

Prakasina sighed and said, "You are very cruel. Do you think I am not well?"

"I know" said Mahina, "the Princess is feeling great pity for that youth of destiny, the orphan boy who was presented to the King to-day."

"Ah! that is it then. It is disturbing me and is causing me acute pain. You have guessed well. I feel well when I see him, but I cannot stay long looking at him, an unknown kind of pain grows in me and makes me uncomfortable. And if I come away from him I feel like fainting. I wish to see him again and again and yet when I see him, I feel like going away from him, I feel an acute painful twitching in the region of my heart, as if he takes it in his hand and presses it. I do not know sisters! what is this unusual state of my feeling. It is kind of attraction which makes me ill."

Mahina whispered in the ear of Lokina. "Don't be anxious and do not turn pale with anxiety. The Princess is already in love with Manmahaji and the King also has seen it. That is why he has left the Princess to us. The cure of her malady of love unknown to her, innocent as she is, is a conversation with Manmahaji, and we should so arrange that Manmahaji should talk to the Princess."

"Come, let us go the ring where Manmahaji is performing those miracles of physical prowess, to me these feats, are of great interest," said Lokina.

"Yes, Princess dear! we ought to be seeing all those feats, come let us go," said Mahina.

And all three went again to the ring where Manmahaji was showing the feats of archery, musketry, gymnastics, scaling erect walls by ropes, jumping high, jumping down from high places, swimming, and a hundred other skills in the most admirable manner. All gathered spectators were applauding him.

As the Princess came to the spot again, Manmahaji had finished his feats, and he had just come out of the ring, responding to the acknowledgements of the spectators by graceful bows of his head all around. And as he came towards getting out, in the passage stood the Princess, and seeking her, he stopped, fell down and kissed the ground before her. "Manmahaji! your feats have astonished everybody," said the Princess tremblingly.

“It is due to your good wishes,” replied Manmahaji.

“Is he not divine in looks?” said the Princess softly turning to Lokina and Mahina.

“Princess! he is as beautiful as God of Love of which we hear so much,” said Mahina.

“But you cannot but be partial to him, as you hail from his village”, said the Princess.

“Let us know what Lokina has to say,” continued the Princess.

“Princess! what can a village girl, illiterate and uncouth, say on subjects of beauty. But I feel in my soul that Manmahaji is a rare gem that lies hidden for aeons and once a while after the lapse of centuries. Nature offers such a beautiful face to the world.”

The Princess looked at Manmahaji again, who was all the while standing with his eyes fixed on the ground, and a smile went rippling over her rose-lips.

“Where are you going Manmahaji in such haste rushing past the Princess,” said Mahina.

“The king, the Lord, calls me there”, replied he.

People came round the Princess who was herself again by now, and she talked to every one of them with maidenly grace.

“Manmahaji has carried off most of the prizes for these games,” said the old man with a great joy in his voice, addressing the Princess Prakasina.

“He deserves more,” said the Princess, “You old father, have given him splendid training in martial skills and he is so lithe of form and nimble of step.”

“It is your loving thought, divine Princess, that inspires good deeds in us,” said the old man.

“What is more, think of him and he casts no shadow on me, they say gods alone cast no shadow and I believe he is a god in the disguise of a man. His name is so peculiar that I feel I have heard it many times in my reveries,” said Lokina.

Talking thus, the Princess also reached the place where prizes were being announced. The people wished that the Princess should give them away. There were about fifty prizes, out of which forty were won by Manmahaji, to the great joy of everybody present. Everyone of this great fair on the very first sight felt so deeply enamoured of him, that his very name and appearance sent a thrill and a joy in their souls, and they looked at him whenever he appeared with their lips half parted with wonder and love and with eyes that had forgotten to wink. Seeing him, his name alongwith that of their God came on their tongue and they felt so brimful of the youth’s charm and its spiritual touch and taste and Scent.

There stood Prakasina in her own garden of smiles with Mahina and Lokina to help in giving away prizes!

“I congratulate you Manmahaji,” the Princess would say every time, when giving each prize to him, and would smile as if she was throwing on his face a gentle shower of flowers. Manmahaji was overwhelmed by her condescension and when he took the last prize, he was on the verge of collapsing, when the old man held him in his arms and carried him away.

“The boy is tired,” said the King, “send him scents and refreshments.”

Perhaps no one had marked except Mahina and Lokina and the King that the Princess had turned pale and was shivering from head to foot. The King saw it and supported her and proposed, “Daughter! let us go and comfort Manmahaji who is very tired by the unusual exertion he has undergone.”

The party hurried thither, but by this time Manmahaji was sitting on the grass, quite fresh, with a glass of refreshing drink in his hand, and as he saw the King approaching, he wished to get up, but the King reached sooner than he had calculated and took him in his lap, and began talking to him with paternal affection. The Princess sat by the side of her father and bending towards Manmahaji gently enquired, “How do you feel Manmahaji?” And he bowed to the ground and replied, “How can anything be wrong when the King and the Princess are by my side? I have never felt so well as I feel to-day, divine Princess!”

Perhaps no one else saw it, but the Princess blushed, and bowed her head like a flower that bends along its stalk with the weight of its own blossom.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CAMP

The people who had come from far and near to Anardha were housed in a city of thatched huts with the straw pallets spread in each. The huts were tastefully built for the purpose, and beflagged. A similar straw-hut with a few more rooms was reserved for the King and the Princess who for the duration of the Fair had chosen to stay with the people. Each was provided with a secure comer for a tiny lamp to burn shedding its soft light within. But the enthusiasm of the people for spending most of their time with the King and their Princess, was in such high tide, as it could not be contained within the frail walls of clean and quite pure cottages. They were filling all the available space with themselves and their gladness.

The night came on wearing its richest jewellery and the Princess, Mahina and Lokina emerged from their rooms to receive her.

“Sisters, see how rich is the jewellery that sister night wears!” said the Princess; “after seeing her, which of us would have the heart to touch any other jewellery? Unless the night gives us a set of her own for us to wear, what a tasteless thing it is to think of wearing any jewels of lesser value.”

“Quite true,” said Lokina, “but I think the night is kind only to those who please her by their utter simplicity like our Princess. Everything is theirs who do not want anything.”

“Lokina must have already robbed the night of its moon, for look. Princess, how her face sheds its soft light. I thought looking at her, just for the twinkling of an eye, that it was moonlit night. But then I regained myself and saw it was Lokina!”

“So, in all, we are four now, but the black night is going to carry all the prizes for beauty. I wish there could be one for pure beauty,” said the Princess.

“Princess! why don’t you fix one, after all you are to give away the prize,” said Mahina.

“All right! then what prize do you think could we choose for beauty,” said the Princess.

“But” said Lokina, “it is difficult for women to judge the beauty of a woman. Both of you are on a wrong track. How can we judge the beauty of night, that is also a woman; she is only a bit older than ourselves, and is a full-grown mature woman who knows how to pose better than us in her jewellery.”

“This is well said,” said the Princess, but without being man, we could surely act as men and take upon ourselves the mind of a man to make the judgement,” said the Princess.

“Then the ‘Sadhu’s boy-disciple’ only knows this art, neither of us can play that part with any ability,” said both Lokina and Mahina together.

“But jokes apart, we can at least fix upon a prize worthy of beauty,” said the Princess.



“Of course,” said Mahina.

“The prize is after all a token of the joy of the prize giver, otherwise, there is nothing that one could add to the treasures of the night, who could don so much jewellery for a brief visit to such a fair as ours,” said Lokina.

“But after all, the prize even as a token of joy has to be something befitting the occasion”, said the Princess.

“I propose Manmahaji as the fit prize for pure beauty,” said Mahina.

“Ah him! to such a blackie,” said Lokina.

“We might refer the matter to Manmahaji himself,” said the Princess and concealed successfully this time her blushes even from the keen eye of Mahina.

“Mahina! you go and call Manmahaji,” said Lokina.

Mahina went flying to their camp, for the old man and Manmahaji had not come out and were deeply absorbed in their own conversation.

Mahina heard from outside, the old man was weeping and Manmahaji was consoling him and saying: “if you do not wish it, I will not follow my own desire.”

“My son! you might follow it, when I am gone from this world and as I told you, it is only a brief while more and the bird of my *Prana* will wing away.”

Mahina stopped outside the cottage just for fun and began listening to the conversation.

“Father! but I beg of your forgiveness for having hurt you. It is for the first time that you told me before the King who I was, and you informed me how my mother came to your house. Knowing this, how can I think of any thing else but searching for my mother, finding her or dying in the search. You have told me today her holy name-*Albita*. With this name I will look for her. “Name is the soul, and the soul is immortal.” You have been telling me all this. As long as I did not know the name of my mother, I could not do anything. But now that I know it, I can find her. Is it not this, then, the highest religion for me, an orphan, to find his mother first,” said Manmahaji.

“You are right, my son! but at the thought of separation from you, I feel like separating from these eighteen years of my own life and it is painful,” said the old man.

“But I am ready to carry out your wishes father!” said Manmahaji.

“Where would you go if I would permit you?” said the old man of Gangola.

“Wherever the road may lead me. I will go calling my mother, and enquiring from every object, every growth, every bush, every hill, every stream. I will go to the forests and the deserts. I will go to the white snows of the Himalayas and to the blue waters of the sea. I will go seeking her and I will not return till I have found her. Having found her, I will come back to you.”

“My son! I would be quitting this body as the Sun goes down on the sixteenth day from today,” said the old man.

“Then there will be no friend of mine left in this world and why are you asking me not to go?” said Manmahaji.

“It is for this reason, my son, that I brought you to Anardha. You have seen the King and the Princess. They shall be your best friends in my place. And the King has already told me to-day that he would take you from tomorrow as his right hand man to teach ‘you the art of Government which means the protection of the people from any harm coming to them from outside the State,” said the old man.

“But father! I beg you on my knees to let me go ere this takes place, for my life will be devoid of all its self-knowledge, and I would be nothing but a dead man, under the circumstances, in which you desire to put me,” said Manmahaji.

“But this is what your mother wished, ‘Not I, but he whom I bear shall see the King of Anardha,” so great was her respect for him, the King. How is it to you, a tutelage under him looks so distasteful? He is not of the line of those kings that strike fear in people. He is love incarnate, he is a saint, a teacher, a God,” said the old man.

“I do not for a moment say that my life would not end in the service of the King or the destiny prophesied for me by my mother shall not be fulfilled, but I must have my own way first. I must fly from my destiny and then if it happens, it is my destiny,” said Manmahaji.

And here he fell at the old man’s feet and cried like a child.

The old man took him in his arms, hugged him to his bosom and also began crying like a child.

“Manmahaji! then do you leave me?” said he.

“Yes father! I cannot stay.”

“Must you go to night? You can’t stay even a day more?” said he.

“To night, father! not a day more,” said Manmahaji.

Here then the man again burst into tears. And brought a little bundle and gave it to Manmahaji. “This bundle contains all the belongings of your great mother, it is a sacred bundle, it is yours, take it my child!”

Mahina burst in and said breathlessly, “Manmahaji; the Princess has sent for you.”

“Yes I am coming,” said Manmahaji.

“No, I am commanded to take you to her with me. So you must come,” said Mahina.

“Coming Mahina! You have become so unfriendly to me in a day, and dote so exclusively on your Princess, giving her also all that love, too, that you bear me,” said Manmahaji and hurriedly tucked the bundle under his pallet.

“Father! then you will wait for me here. I will be coming soon after having met the Princess,” said Manmahaji.

Both Manmahaji and Mahina emerged from the straw thatched hut-camp that was assigned to Gangola people, and looking up to the skies said, “How tearstained is the face of the sky tonight, Mahina!”

“You must have been weeping like a child, that is why you think so,” said Mahina.

By this time, with hurried steps, they reached the spot where Princess Prakasina and Lokina were waiting for the return of Mahina.

“You took very long, Mahina,” said Lokina.

“Manmahaji! are you feeling better now,” said the Princess.

“I am quite right now, dear Princess, only I have been remembering my mother and feeling sad,” said Manmahaji.

“Manmahaji! but your mother would not wish you any time to be sad and thinking of her, you should be all the more gladsome that you have such a great mother. She is the greatest lady that I know of,” said the Princess.

“Have you ever met her, my divine Princess?” said Manmahaji.

“Yes, I have met her! Did I not? say Mahina! Did I not? speak Lokina! Did I not?” said the Princess.

“Yes” said Lokina and Mahina both together.

“But dear Princess! how could you? My mother died when I was only a month old, I have not seen her, how could you?” said Manmahaji.

“But dear Manmahaji! I have seen her. And she knows me,” said the Princess.

“But how can I believe?” said Manmahaji.

“May then I convince you? Look? I tell you, she has left a bundle with the old man to give you when you become of age,” said the Princess.

At this Manmahaji laughed heartily, gay as a bird he was by temperament.

“This is a trick,” said he, “Mahina must have seen me taking a bundle from the old man, and she must have told you. Its very clever.”

The Princess also, in reply laughed heartily and said, ‘Manmahaji, how strange! Mahina just came alongwith you and she has had no time to inform me of what had happened inside the cottage. All right, if I have come to know about the bundle from Mahina, then the contents of the bundle should be unknown to me.”

“Yes! Yes! the contents should be quite un-known to you,” Replied Manmahaji.”

“They are also unknown to you so far,” said the Princess.

“Yes, dear Princess!” said he.

“Very well! then I tell you. There is the sacred robe worn by your mother, it has a necklace of rubies and there are five rubies in it in all. This necklace is enclosed in a little casket made of quartz stone and this is enclosed in a green velvet cover, and is secured by a red silk thread wound all round it, the packet having the appearance of a ruby. And I know for whom it is meant, but I won’t tell you. Then there is a rosary of twenty-eight crystals of sapphire and this is for you,” said the Princess.

“Come! let us open the bundle and see,” said Manmahaji.

“But when you don’t believe me you wouldn’t believe even if it is so, for you will say the old man must have informed me,” said the Princess.

“Yes, I could certainly think so,” said Manmahaji reflectively.

The Princess then said, “Let us leave that sacred topic aside. Now that you are as gay as yourself, we have called you here to refer to you an interesting problem. Seeing the night in her superb dark blue dress and diamonds, an idea was mooted here to institute a prize for beauty in this kingdom and give it every year as we give prizes for arts and sports. Could you help us in choosing a fitting prize for beauty.”

“Mahina, your sister, let me tell you, has suggested yourself as the prize,” said Lokina; “but I demurred to giving such a precious youth as yourself to such blackie:”

“But who has adjudged night as beautiful? To me the most beautiful thing that one can ever imagine is your Princess,” said Manmahaji.

I told them exactly this. How can girls judge the beauty of girls. And they were insisting, like girls, that they can,” said Lokina.

“But the point is the prize for beauty to be fixed and to be given away is for pure beauty,” said Mahina.

“Yes, Manmahaji! we have sought your help for determining a prize for the beautiful one,” said the Princess.

“Dear Princess! In my opinion, the prize for beauty is ‘T’, said Manmahaji.

Lokina and Mahina clapped their hands in joy and said: “There! There! Manmahaji is the prize.”

“I had already fixed it,” said Mahina.

“I also now agree,” said Lokina.

Manmahaji a bit confused said: “Ladies! I do not mean this little dotted ‘T’ but the undotted capital ‘T’—the Self. The prize for beauty is giving away one’s self,” said Manmahaji.

“Exactly, this is what we say,” said Mahina and Lokina together.

“You, yourself have said that the Princess is pure beauty. And you yourself have said that the prize for beauty is to be yourself.”

At this Manmahaji fell down and kissed the ground before the Princess and said, “Forgive me, pardon me. Princess for the misunderstanding that has been built out of my innocent words by these two ladies.”

The Princess bent down and lifted Manmahaji and laughingly said: “Why do you get worried Manmahaji. You are my prize now and I have won you.”

Manmahaji also joined in the joke and laughed heartily.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AT THE FOOT OF THE SIWALIKS

A few shepherds, the dwellers of the Trans-Himalayan regions were encamping on an hillside above Hardwar at the foot of the Siwalik hills of Doon, towards the middle of the winter season, as it was their wont, with a flock of white sheep grazing on the bank of a quartzite-covered dry bed of a hill-torrent.

These shepherds, in those old days, as on a much lesser scale now, carried on a brisk trade with India, bringing all kinds of articles, from precious rubies and sapphires down to common trinkets, many coloured pebble-beads, and useful medicines like crude borax, *Salab misri, atis, aconite*, and taking in exchange, the produce of India loaded on their sheep, for loading whom they had special miniature double-flapped bags enough to hold about 5 lbs. of the merchandise in each flap, which were strapped astride on to the backs of the sheep. Frequently they used to slip down the valleys and go to the Indian plains visiting holy Buddhistic places of India, as most of them were Buddhists by faith. Their women folk also accompanied them in these journeys and their visit every year towards winter lent a picturesque appearance to these deserted hills.

These people, in general, had of course the well-known round Mongolian faces, the high cheek-bones and small linear eyes, but a few amongst them occasionally had wonderful large eyes reminding one of the tranquil depths of the lakes of the Himalayas. They glowed with health and most of them looked like the white snow-tops on which trembles the early red of the Eastern sky. Their limbs and legs bore the signs of long tramps on foot and seemed ready for any adventure at all times. They generally wore their cover-all woollen caps, which as they got down to the warmer plains, were tucked up in the form of round-rimmed flat turbans, though, they still seemed associated with their fur and skin-coats, soft leather boots, woollen socks and other paraphernalia of the denizens of the snowy regions. Their women had their tresses done up in one or two broad braids thrown back and wore long loose broad-sleeved woollen skirts generally of deep blue colour, embroidered with red silk thread on the sleeves, the breasts and on the folds that fell down like a shower of liquid lines of a waterfall, on either side of the waist. And they lived to have a red handkerchief bound round their head.

The whole homes of these fair Tartars were, both summer and winter, on their feet. Their profession of trade in which they were engaged with all the love for its romance and adventure, found for them, everywhere, a new house, a new day and a new night.

Their country was travelling, going from scene to scene of man and nature, and the variety of every new day kept them much better reconciled with themselves, than those who dwelt in palaces of marble and pearl to pass their sick days in pale-faced luxury.

One of these shepherds with huge woollen cap and woollen pyjamas was squatting on the pebbly ground with both his legs stretched full before him, his upper half forming a kind of right angle with this straight line, so made by him, of his legs, and he was mending his huge woollen socks. His attention was drawn up by the approaching figure of a tall, straight slim young man who had a good bunch of tresses flowing down a towering head. He was pale, and excepting a faint blue shade on his upper lip, his face was clean as that of a boy, but he looked much riper than a boy. His

whole figure was lined as if with the soft light of a moon concealed in his hands. His was a face that many a man and woman would love to look at for hours with parted lips. In spite of its paleness, an inborn nobility dwelt in its fairy curves. The young man came and sat close to this old shepherd whose few hair on his chin went running straight down like the beard of a goat. And his whiskers too were thin, reminding one of a typical Chinaman. But his face was health-flushed and though old, he was in the enjoyment of the pink of his youth. He was an exception to his race as regards his eyes. As he looked up, from under his huge goggles one could see his large eyes were red like those of a hawk.

“What is your name, sir?” said the young man.

“My name is Tistan,” said the shepherd looking up and putting down his sock and his stitching needle on his straightened knees and with his hands resting on the heaped up socks.

“And yours?” said Tistan.

“They call me *Allala*”, said the young man.

“Do you want to buy some borax, we have sold all,” said the shepherd.

“No! I am not for borax. I want to know when you would be going back to the hills and whether you could show me the way to Mansarovar,” said Allala.

“Yes! our village is only 80 miles India side of Mansarovar. We go there every year twice for a bath. And the way we go up is double-rounding the Kedar glaciers, and then across the high snow plateaus of the Trans-Himalayas, and then after touching the Kailash, we go straight on. It would take you not less than two months with us to reach there after we leave the outer Himalayas. You know, we go slowly, restfully, we have lost the habit of being in haste. Travelling day and night being our profession, every-where is our destination, and so all those springs that put speed into man’s feet are broken in us. And similarly slow are our sheep, especially when the poor beings are under a load. We do not load too much on them, but two seers each side of them is a load you know!” said Tistan.

“Splendid! that will do very well. When do you start?” asked the young man.

“We leave here by the middle of March and across the outer Himalayas and the valleys beyond, by the end of the month. Then begins the ascents of the India-side inner Himalayas, and we go to the snow-plateaus, in another month. Another fifteen days to Kailash more or less. But look here! we do not like to have pilgrims with us, if you are one of the pilgrims to Mansarovar. They are in insane haste to go, touch and come away, even our eyes cannot travel so fast. We refuse always to be yoked with them. We love leisure, sun-shine, wind and water and we go stopping over with these our kith and kin. Every tree in our way is an old comrade of ours, and some time on being pressed, we have to halt accepting its invitation. Then there are fountains of crystal waters on the way, and the dancing water-falls, the little singing streams and their green velvety banks, and all these things are as love-alive to us as we ourselves and our sheep are. And sometimes the old acquaintances of our flocks come up and we have to halt for their sake for days. In comradeship, there is always, as you know, a hearty, jolly give-and-take, and some times, we have to wait for the sake of our lifelong friends, the sheep. So if you are in haste, you can make other arrangements with

other pilgrims that go to Mansarovar. And there are scores of them. Plenty, my friend! plenty of them that go.”

“No! I am not a pilgrim in that sense. I wish to go with you and not with those who run in haste even when on a pilgrimage,” said Allala.

“Very well then, come here and join us by the middle of March. If you are a day or two late, you know our speed, you can catch up with us at a little distance,” said Tistan.

“But are you alone in this camp?” said Allala.

“No! I am left alone here with this flock grazing yonder there, my wife and children have gone to the plains on pilgrimage. It is wonderful, is it not, the people from Hindustan go on pilgrimage to sacred lakes and holy rivers, right up to Mansarovar, have a dip there and return. On the other hand, we want to see beautiful buildings, temples, and such places of worship as are built by man. You fall on your knees and kiss the ground on seeing high mountains and the snows, and we do the same on the marble of beauty. Eyes differ, my friend! and choice. But possibly the eyes of man need a variety even in forms of beauty and God too!”

“Quite right, Tistan! our Nature being infinite, it gropes for an infinite newness of expression or an infinite newness of our own hunger for beauty,” said Allala.

“If you permit me, I might live with you and learn the language of the Trans-Himalayan people, before we are ready to march,” added Allala.

“That fits in very well, as I am quite alone and it will take about two months from now for my people to return and we go up as soon as they return,” said the shepherd.

Allala then sat down. There was a little bundle led up on his shoulders, as if it were a huge purse, and this he never parted with except when he bathed. After the bath, he would put on a yellow shred of cloth round himself and underneath it, on the shoulders, he had a method of his own for tying up, this bundle in a way as if it were an extra suit of clothes which he carried with him wherever he went. He slept with it and woke with it. It had become the part of his body, as if it were.

And by the middle of March when they started, Allala had already begun speaking the language of the shepherd with a remarkable fluency.



## Chapter IX

### THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF GLACIERS

After four days' journey on foot from a little hill station called Tehri, where Billing Ganga comes and meets Bhagirathi Ganga, and from there flows down to Rishikesh and Hardwar and then to the plains, and after crossing a tributary of Billing Ganga at one or two places, towards the north, about sixty miles away, there is till today a place called *Viasboon* or *Vashishtha Asbram*, where in the Ramayan period, the seer Vashishtha used to live and meditate, except when he was called by the kings of the old Ajodhia to come and grace the Yajnas and other ceremonies. A narrow foot-path along the tortuous current of Billing Ganga, goes leading the pilgrims up to *Viasboon*, as the hill-men call it, and then on up to the '*Garden of Fairies*.' The latter is a green velvety stretch of a grassy plateau which, in new summer, is all over embroidered with little flowers of many shapes and colours, blue, yellow and red. This very road further on, glides on past the old monastery of *Paoli Kanta* on one side of it and with The Himalayan glaciers in front of it, across the Trans-Himalayas, to Mansarovar.

In old times, in which runs our story, this way to Mansarovar was a short cut and the travellers from China came this way from the desert of Gobi. In the "*Garden of Fairies*" about 10,000 ft. above the sea level on the grassy plateau were seen pitched up one mat tents of the camp of the old shepherd Tistan with his flock.

One Early morning, Tistan and Allala were standing out on the eastern side of the camp in company with cold, calm air of the Himalayan dawn awaiting the Sun that was to come and lift the curtain from the face of the Himalayan glaciers from Badri Narayan to Jamnotri, and open to view the sublimest art-craft of the Beautiful Creator. Every morning Tistan rose early and waited for it and with him Allala. And it was this glorious scene that had joy-delayed the shepherds camp here for about a fortnight more than they had intended, and every one was filling his soul here to his heart's content with this superb gladness.

As the Sun rose, the shepherd and Allala sat speechless, their whole bodies assuming the posture of one long salutation to God made so manifest in this sublime scene of the Sun rise of the Glaciers of the ancient-Himalayas.

"Allala! this region is known to us as *Hem Khand*, the Golden Region. Wherever we go, we carry this Golden Land in our soul. Mind kindled by this beauty passes beyond all sorrows. Miserable people think all kinds of things about life and death. But is not life worth a hundred selves if one sees such a glory even once."

"Tistan! sorrows vanish in this contemplation of God. But with such a blazing youthful beauty before one's eyes, one does not like to believe that all this is to end in death. And that we are born like flowers for a while and we cease to be. One could pass away with any set of convenient beliefs about life and death and with any set of mixtures of pains and pleasures, if it is all but for a while, and this nothing-is-after-death-philosophy would be quite a good consolation, if nature had no beauty in her face, and if our little flesh hearts and eyes and minds were not irresistibly attracted

towards it, as if some beautiful one stood behind these scenes in person, smiling at our resistance when involuntarily our every thing is being pulled towards some one behind the veil,” said Allala.

“Allala! there is not One behind the veil, there is an infinity of the beautiful ones behind the veil, and it is the collective reflection of that Glorious One Infinity of persons, that falling on the scenes of Nature makes them all-fascinating. It is not the material aspect of the Sublime Nature that attracts, but those subtle colours that filter down through it to our soul,” said Tistan.

“My purpose is to get behind the veil a bit and have a glimpse of the inner view,” said Allala.

“Ah! my friend! there is not one veil, there are veils after veils, how much one can search, it is endless. But to go behind the veils, one must take off one’s own veils first and even then, earth clogged as we are with this body, we require the shade of personal, material forms on those inner beauties of life before we can see them, or feel any attraction for them,” said Tistan.

“But who would teach me how to take off the veil of my mind and see things that are no more, for example, my mother. Seeing her even with the shade of her that form which is known to mind’s eye, would lift a great veil from my mind. Ah! I would begin to feel personally that after all nothing dies as you have been kindly talking to me all my way and consoling me that it is quite easy to converse with the ‘Dead’, to live with them, just as you and I meet,” said Allala.

“Allala! let me tell you the secret. I am an old man, I have spent all my life in learning all the ancient methods of this veil-lifting, by Dhyanam, but I have found the Anardha way of *Naming Him* the least troublesome and most enlightening. But what is given in books cannot be understood till it comes to you itself. Buddhism has disappeared from amongst us, and the commentaries of the poor mortals on its Truth have reduced it to the dead level of small ignorance of the commentators and interpreters. Boddhisatva must come and live in flesh for you before he can teach the path of Nirvana. For each disciple like you, there is a Heaven-appointed Boddhisatva and is after you, driving you to himself and through himself to the Door of Truth. He alone can open the Gates of Nirvana for you. He alone by his touch and vision taught you from within, the path to Omniscience of all Time and Space,” said Tistan.

“But I feel it must be you! you must now take me out of this illusion of no-belief to anything beyond. In the present frame of my mind, I can only say this much, that I see beauty which is passing away and the seer thereof is also passing, melting away, away into nothing,” said Allala.

“The intellectual beliefs and arrived-at convictions, and made-up faiths, and forced-in thoughts, and artificial props of will-raised pillars to support a well deliberated scheme of life are diseases, pains, hindrances in the path of soul. My young, good friend! that is not the equipment needed for your journey to your teacher, Boddhisatva. Let me tell you, you are thrice blessed that you have no other faith, but of the actual relation you feel towards beauty. This is the virgin purity of your mind. If you do not move on from here, say, and if there is no one to lead you on further, this purity would crystallize into a daily habit of sense enjoyment of beauty and its personal relations with you, whatever form it might take, perhaps they call it the life of the artist. Occasionally, there will be a tear in your eyes, that everything, both the seer and the seen are passing away, melting away, but in spite of this underlying philosophical grief, the attraction for the Beautiful face would be so great that it will drop the tear in the wine-cup which she would hold to your lips and with her and

the wine-cup and the tear, you would safely pass through the illusion of life in a pleasant mood. You would thus pass living nearest to God as Beauty, in the freed love of two souls come together. It is what we know life of mingled purity of feeling of the joy of beauty and the sorrow of its evanescence. Of all those lives that are not permitted a glimpse behind the veils, even occasionally, the life of this faith in Beauty, this life of art is the best, for it is of the purest feeling that is, otherwise, possible to man. This life of aesthete is full of greater glow of life than any other. I know of, except of course that of an adept or an Arahaat who in his supreme wisdom becomes simple as a babe. Religious men, preachers of ethics, saints and goodmen live in darkness, without the light that comes of itself. Ignorance does not mean ignorance of the 'why' and the 'wherefore' of creation, but a life lived in darkness of soul. The light of soul, the glow of life is always born of the attraction for beauty in all forms, in all colours, in all sounds, in all relations, and it is maintained and nourished by a continuous response to the Beautiful," said Tistan.

"Ah! this is Truth reduced to its infinite simplicity and complete naturalness of its perfection. Great religions do not die then, it is men that die, even when they seem quite alive, as soon as their eye for the Beautiful is closed!" said Allala.

"Religion my friend! is this glow at its brightest, at its intensest. To me at this moment, this burning 'sword of God' of the Glaciers before you is my religion in concrete. If our being is full of this gold, this beauty, this joy, we ourselves are the greatest religion," said Tistan.

"This is splendid! but no one can think this at all if he is removed a little away from the side of Beauty, by which we are now sitting and speaking. One must be in the "Garden of Fairies" of the Himalayas to have so much pleasure," said Allala.

"Quite true! but apart from it, one always has the desire to be by the side of Beauty carried on his body everywhere by himself. It is not always possible to come face to face with this beauty, but if the desire for it blazes up, and hill in a way would burn with the same gold as spreads on these snowy glaciers," said Tistan.

"Quite right! but to keep that desire in glow becomes difficult for mortals," said Allala.

"It is but for this, that the Boddhisatvas say to keep it aglow by the Breath of Naming the Beautiful. When they say 'Buddha', 'Buddha', it is kindled. For example, if we call this scene of beauty before us, say, Buddha, and if we were to repeat this Name of this scene away from it, it is certain that it would flash past our memory at first faintly, then less faintly and then, at times, it may stand before us just as it is now. It is the inner experience of the Namers that the repetition of Nam has the power to precipitate one day the whole scene in as clear a form, nay, in a much clearer form in our mind, seeing whose sudden appearance before us, our whole being gets wonder-choked, just as we are this moment fettered here to this sweet vision of the glaciers.

"So this "Senseless" repetition of the Name by the Buddhist saints is the secret which makes the presence of Beauty within us as constant, nay more constant, that we find it in this outer space. The practice of this Dhyanam of Beauty and its Nam-Simrin is not in 'Thinking', but let us say, in artistic building up of beauty within us. Name and Name, and thus enclosing ourselves in an unbroken vision of beauty, just as the silk worm weaves its own sphere of soil around itself and lives in it. It is, so to say, the chiselling by the repeated fall of the hammer of "Naming-Him," the infinite

beauty of our Self in our own self,” said Tistan. “It is licking the rocks into shape of our Beloved,” asked Tistan again.

“I once met an old sage in the distant kingdom of Anardha in the North-western plain of India and he too told me-Name is a great secret and by Naming we sometimes get the visit of the Named and see Him face to face,” said Allala.

Tistan was visibly moved, his eyes closed and his face beamed with the fire of some holy memory and all was quiet for a while, two pearly tears stood on the red Mongolian cheeks of Tistan, as the light from Himalayan glaciers came and gathered them in her golden palms and carried them away.

Allala, too, fell into a trance. And these two statues of gold, as if, of Sakyamuni Buddha, self-carved, made the place where they sat motionless, a temple, as the sunlight creeping on the green floor of the 'Garden of Fairies', suddenly leapt from the flower-carpet on to their Padmasanas, and went upward, touching the closed lotuses of their eyes, right up to the crown of the Buddhas in Samadhi.

When the eyes of these two statues opened, the gold on the snows of the holy glaciers had flowed off, and there lay open below it the heaps of diamonds of the purest water, in that abundance which reduced the desire of gathering them with a million hands, into the simple desire of oneself being gathered with them. And their gaze was fixed for a long while on the white crystals, as the Nurse of the saints, the sun light, came and made these two gods of the "Garden of Fairies" quite warm with the blood of life, till one could hear it coursing through the veins of the statues in the divine tunes chanted in the depths of the bosom of a valley, by a distant Ganga flowing deep-sounding. (Every stream in the inner Himalayas that goes to Ganga is called Ganga.)

"So Allala! you have been within the holy precincts of the Kingdom of Anardha, it is a sign of good luck. It is a kingdom of spirit. The line of Kings of Anardha is a line of Bodhisattavas that have incarnated in succession, and the Buddhist adepts and Arahaats in the guise of Kings have spiritualised the whole humanity there. The present ruler Jasmanji is an Arahaat that was in his last birth here in the monastery of Roali Kanta. He is now incarnated there. The Kingdom of Anardha is the only spot now left on earth, where true Buddhist life can be seen. It is Government by the Lord's law of love, sin and crime have, forever, been abolished there. To us, the holiest places are Mansarovar and Poali Kanta in the Himalayas and the Kingdom of Anardha on the plains of India. It is the only spot left at least for us Buddhist. The world's senseless Vandalism has driven the religion of *Nam Simrin*, which the Adepts called the Religion of Nirvana, out of the heart of humanity, replacing it by Satanism of the vedic rituals and Yajnas, in which they again have begun to murder scores of animals on every possible occasion. I can only say, it is ill-luck of the people who are made victim to a myriad play of the passion and prejudice of the Human intellect."

"The kingdom of Anardha is really a heaven on earth. There is immaculate peace in its villages, and wherever you go, you are welcomed with the over-glowing love and offerings of the people. A guest to them is God come home. And how peacefully, joyously they live free of diseases of body and mind. The breeze there is laden with the perfume of the people's divine desires of doing good to each other. There are no orphans there, no sorrow of the windows, no cries of the poor and the hungry. The blind and the deaf and the lame too have their own joy of Pure beauty, for if they lack one sense, they have another which others have not. And they are happy. In inner happiness, the last balance of equality of man is finally struck. There is no hunger in the land nor nakedness. That kingdom is the blessed Kingdom of God on earth," said Allala.

"Quite so, my young man! if hunger is cured, and nakedness is covered, the man if he be man in the light of self-knowledge and self-joy needs nothing more. But how good it is, you have seen the kingdom of Anardha. I wished also to go there this time, but my children and wife thought of seeing other holy places like Gaya and they had the preference. The young children and women have their way, and it is best to let them have it. I am deeply interested in Anardha, for one Majestic Being a great Arahaat lady, I fancy, had gone there from Poali Kanta monastery some years ago," said Tistan, whose eyes at this moment filled up with tears and his whole frame was in visible emotion.

“Who was she? you seem to be greatly moved by the very mention of her. And I too fell like knowing more about her,” said Allala.

“Hush! I can’t say more, nor I know more. She met me once just like a flash of light, and I never saw her again. She is my Buddha. She is my saviour,” said Tistan.

“But what was her name?” said the young man.

“It is the holy name I repeat. It is Albita,” said Tistan, and fell on the ground, in deep emotion, crying like a child.

Allala, too, began weeping and singing with tears some sad tunes which purported to be calling mother out of space and time. It was a sweet, say cry of the orphan, it was a weeping that thrilled even the calm holiness of the place with human emotion, and it seemed the body of Allala was melting into his own cries.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GARDEN OF FAIRIES

Some of the little children of the camp playing out in the sunshine had gathered round the old Tistan and others round the young Allala. They would get on to their shoulders and bend with all the force of their tiny, white hands reddened by the scrubbing in cold water and with pieces of rough pebbles that their mother gave them, -the heads of these two elderly men, as if they were huge animals to them. Tistan and Allala would bend low with the weight of so many kiddies riding astride on their necks and playfully throw them on to the grassy velvet which was of uniform thickness of about 3 inches in depth. This green Himalayan grass in those regions is really a luxury spreading for miles like a carpet of green velvet. Even if the kiddies were hurt, they would not cry or complain, as they were all taking the hurts as the natural give and take of the kinds of horse-riding, neck-riding sports that they used to have.

One was badly hurt and when Allala saw that he was going to cry, he drew his attention away from his hurt, by running to him, suddenly lifting him up in both his hands by catching him, from under the armpits and throwing him up apparently recklessly. And there did go, the plump white, young Tibetan flung in air about a yard above the head of every one and came tumbling down immediately with his baby curls unfurled in air, his lips white and his cry completely suppressed in the suddenness of his lift and his fall back into the hands of Allala, who then embraced the kid, kissed him and put him gently again on the grass velvet. Another would come running on his bare, tiny feet, asking Allala to be his mountain which he would scale. This was the game Allala had introduced in this camp. He would stand bending down a little and would hold both the hands of the child in his own, and ask him to put his two tiny feet at first on his feet, then on his legs joined together in the form of a straight stem of a tree. Having thus secured the child in his hand he would throw his head back pulling the arms of the child straight towards himself and cheering him he would say: "Go on climber! get on the mountain. Bravo, scale on. It is done, you will soon reach the summit," and the tiny child thus helped by the pull at both of his arms, and by the springy touch of the muscles of Allala would go up scaling, getting pleased with his ability to be able to scale high mountains. On and on the young mountain climber would climb, till he would reach the neck, where he would immediately recognise his horse and begin to ride astride, throwing his legs in front and back of Allala, and applying the spurs of the naked heels to make the horse move, and trot and gallop. And Allala would thus go round the camp trotting or galloping under the young rider. This game caused immense amusement amongst the little children and each had given its own special name to Allala. Some called him 'horse', some 'mountain' some 'slow ass', some 'quick mule', and so on.

But they enjoyed their games this morning in the Sun, as it was a golden day after many days of incessant rain.

Mother was calling them by this time to take their milk and all ran as so many human sheep to their angelic shepherd, the mother.

"Tistan: I was to ask you if it were at all possible to see Albita. The name draws my very soul out of me," said Allala.

Tistan went in and brought a little mirror and holding it up to Allala said, "Peculiarly enough, you are transfigured and see that Holy Face of the Adept in you."



Allala saw the whole face of his mother super impressed on his own, and so complete was the reflection in his own that he was lost in this vision for a long while, as Tistan stood holding the mirror to him. As Tistan removed the mirror, Allala fell flat on the grass and it seemed as if he had seen Albata and was placing his head at her feet in a reverie of worship.

And Tistan too laid his head on the ground in deep reverence with a visible emotion that sent the whole of his blood running to his forehead, and his hands and feet became icy-cold.

“Allala: strangely enough: you bear her features, Pray tell me if you have seen Albata the great,” said Tistan in a child like enquiry.

“No: I am seeking Albata. I have not yet seen Albata.”

“But when I showed the mirror, were you not Albata?”

“Yes, that time I too saw Albata in my face.”

“Then you yourself are Albata. I still see the very same face in you before my eyes.”

Allala half suspecting to see her face again in his face took up the mirror and saw his own familiar features and not those of his mother that he had just seen.

“No!” said Allala, “I am Allala, I see my own features now. That time I did see those of Albata in me.”

“Here see again, I see no difference,” and saying this Tistan again held the mirror to Allala, who found himself again in the same trance. This was repeated about seven times, when Allala fell at the feet of Tistan saying: “Sir! you are great. It is the miracle your mind is doing before my eyes, and you are reflecting out of yourself her image on me. Pardon me sir, I have been greatly mistaken in not having recognised you,” said Allala and fell crying at his feet like a child and continued: “you carry her image in your soul and it is in your power to throw that image like light on any one’s face. Pray, lead me on to her.”

“Pardon! pardon Allala. I am a poor shepherd. I am not what you seem to guess, I am a simple, foolish man knowing little about these things”, said Tistan apologetically.

“Yes, my Lord! Pray take mercy on me and initiate me into the mystery of life, so that I may meet Albata,” said Allala.

“But where is the journey and how long it is, my Allala from you to yourself? She lives in you. Where is the space for gods to live, if it is not in the hearts of men like yourself. Your own thoughts shut the door on you, Allala,” said Tistan.

“But sir! I have had enough of that mystic thought. Many philosophers on my way up told me the same thing over and over again. One told me once so powerfully that I roamed for a whole year thinking I am Albata. It was a kind of intoxication in which I felt myself and cried at the top of my voice of joy— “Oh! I am Albata!”, but when that intoxication ended as all intoxicated states of

mind do end, I found I had been clutching at sand grains mistaking them, due to my intoxicated state, as real pearls and gems,” said Allala.

“Quite right. I see what you mean. But the philosophers did say what, in fact, is Truth. All the outer space and time is rolled in a little casket of your heart no bigger than this thumb, and every one meets whom-so ever he desires there, and Time and Space spread out their vast theatre on another scale in ourselves, and you can see everything there, whenever you wish and whatever of the past or the future that you might wish to see. The whole Reality lives in you. It is there. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door opens,” said Tistan.

“Sir! this again is all I have heard so many times, just as I have seen many pieces of mirror before you showed me one and even your one when I see it by myself is only a mirror. If this is truth, it is like the mirror with the difference of its being in your hand and you show me I see I am immediately what I never have been before to myself viz. Albita, and the same in my hand shows my unfortunate face that had not the good luck of being kissed by his mother even once,” said Allala.

Tistan smiled and looked at him in a way as if he appreciated his penetration into the crux of his magic.

“My friend! you are quite right, there is no doubt as to that statement being true. But the difference is that a mere statement made or heard or learnt or taught, or repeated cannot make the truth thereof a Personal Realisation by itself.”

Quite so sir! what I feel now is that the whole secret of things is the Man of Realisation, who in the spirit of sacrifice imparts his whole self and its knowledge to another in a thought, in a look, in a glance. He is the true giver who gives it as a gift, as a grace. It is, in fact, sir, the feast of his own flesh and blood. He gives us and bestows the fruits of his own labours of aeons on us in no time,” said Allala.

“This is undoubtedly true. But the main thing is to get to the Giver. Till you get there, you have to pass through thousand holes like the round gold wire being drawn into a fine thread of gold. Events and incidents, sorrows and joys, sins and virtues, knowledge and ignorance, ups and downs of life are all like holes through which you have to pass, before you are fit enough to meet the Giver. Both are equally right, those who say it depends on one’s own infinite strivings, and those who say no endeavours are required, it is an act of grace; those who say it is achievement and those who say it is a gift of God. Till you have met your Giver and till the moment of his giving himself away to you comes, it is all endeavour, all climbing up hill, all doing, thinking, feeling, acting work, work, work for the selfupliftment, but when you have met him, and received his grace, all is over for you. There is nothing for you to do, no more hard breathing efforts to keep steady; you are on the top, the flower has burst open: All action has ceased. The wheel of cause and effect is shattered and lies at your feet. The wreath of the victor is placed on your brow by His Own Hand. All life is lived, all death has ceased for you.”

“But pray, take me into your discipleship and take me through all the holes in a day. For if it is a process, it depends on the skill of the man performing it. The same may take aeons, centuries and the same wheel may be revolved by a powerful man in a second. Pray revolve all for me now and initiate me into life,” said Allala.

“No! not I! your share is not with me. Your Teacher is another. He is to meet you somewhere, during this journey”, said Tistan very gravely, his eyes were looking upward towards the sky as if he was trying to hear the very words from some one else’s lips before he was to utter them.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GUESTS

Towards the nightfall, as the shepherdess assisted by her daughter had lighted fire to cook bread and boil vegetables that they had collected during the day, two guests approached the camp coming down from the glaciers side. One was a middle aged mongol wearing large green goggles on a flat broad face, as if the Creator had touched a snow ball with a few ink marks and made it into a human face. In spite of the fatigue of a long tramp which was evident from the condition of their straw-sandals, and their feet and ankles and calves which were securely bandaged in lemon-coloured leather socks, the face of the elder was suffused with smiles as fresh as dimple round the chin of a child fresh from its dewy slumber. The younger Mongol was pale and, it seemed, if they had to go a mile more, his legs would have fallen apart under him and he on them in a heap.

Tistan got out of the little low roofed mat tent and welcomed them with the love no less than that of a mother welcoming a long-parted son. A sort of hot broth of cooked rice was ready at hand and the wife of Tistan brought two good steaming cups to the guests, and with very polite bows and smiles of an entertaining goddess, she placed them before the guests. The elder looked at her, took out his goggles and bowed his head in deep reverence, saying by this silent acknowledgement much more than words could say on such a rare occasion.

By this time the young man had laid himself flat on the floor of the tent and the elder shepherd boys had caught hold of his legs and arms and had begun giving such a rapid massage all over, that the young man was soon recovering his normal vigour and nimbleness of limbs. He got up and quaffed the cup and laid himself again down and the process of the message went on again. The boys vied with each other to relieve the limb each had taken charge of, earlier than the other. They treated him like dead matter.

Round the steaming cup of the nice-rice-soup, began polite enquiries. For those old shepherds were strictly vegetarian as they bore paternal love towards the animals and their children. "Whence are you coming sir?" said Tistan.

"Sir! we left early this morning when it was quite dark the monastery of Poali Kanta and we hardly expected to reach the "Garden of Fairies by this evening, but we have come," said the new comer.

"Poali Kanta! What brought you there?" said Tistan.

"That is a long story. But you know, for us, the Buddhists, the monastery of Poali Kanta is a place of holy pilgrimage," said the new comer.

"Oh! it is only pilgrimage then," remarked Tistan.

"It is a pilgrimage as well as study."

"I thought you, at this stage, ought to have finished with your studies," said Tistan.

“Some time you complete your studies for yourself but you have to study for others.”

Tistan laughed a gay laughter, showing to the guest as if how foolish was his own remark and giving him the impression that he had committed a folly out of which the best retreat for him was by a hearty good laughter.

By this time, the steaming dishes of the evening meals were put before Tistan and the guest and Allala who was deeply absorbed in listening to the words of this new guest.

And the children had already gathered round the younger guest and were giving him a good dinner and a good time, regaling him with childish stories, jokes, laughter and fun. The tent was *en fete*.

Just then a girl came in saying, “Father! Ansi, the watch dog, has hurt Mala who had been running at him with her little head. Evidently, they were playing and accidentally the sheep is hurt.” “Bring her in,” said Tistan.

“Hallo! Mala! you are hurt,” said Tistan who had given names to each sheep of his flock and they listened to his voice and their own name from his lips as if they understood his language.

Mala came closer crouching at his feet and laying its head at them. He caressed her by taking his hand all over her woolly back and then lifted her face and stroked it tenderly by the palms of both his hands.

“Here! have a morsel of my bread,” said Tistan. The sheep greedily opened her mouth and put it forward rather aggressively, snatching the little morsel from his hand.

“Ansi! Ansi!” called Tistan and the dog came running in, with his bushy tail turned downward between his hind legs, and crouching, crouching, smaller and smaller as if he already expected a beating.

“Ansi! this is not like yourself. You are to protect these poor sheep, not to molest them. You are a lion. Come! be good,” said Tistan.

At this, the dog came crooning towards the sheep and rubbing his back against the wool of the sheep Mala.

“Mala! now here, you give this morsel to Ansi,” said Tistan giving another morsel to the sheep who took it from his hand in her mouth and went and put it right in the opened mouth of the dog.

“You are very good. Go! don’t fight any more,” said Tistan and the dog took the sheep to enclosure where they were penned for the night.

The Mongol was elated at this scene and felt himself more comfortable in the spirit of love that dwelt under the frail mat-tent. In consequence of this, the Mongol became more familiar and his hard expression of a serious scholar began softening more and more every moment that passed.

“What is the name of my honoured host?” said the Mongol.

“Sir, they call me Tistan, I am a humble shepherd, playing my little trade between India and Tibet,” said Tistan.

“My name is Hang Chang and I am a scholar from China from the Buddhist University of Loyang. For the last twenty two years, I have been roaming in India, as I have been commanded by the University to write a complete history of the Buddhist monuments and monasteries in North-West and North India including and Himalayan region known as Poali Kanta. A young scholar abler than myself, who has chosen to be under my training has just come from China searching me, and has after all his journeys found me by chance at Mansarovar after a tramp of three years in the Great Fair of Buddhism that takes place after every five years at Mansarovar, coming the old foot-path route along the Northern border of the Himalayas. And this little bundle that he is carrying on his back is all that I have gathered here,” said the guest.

“Hang Chang! it is so good a name. Hang Chang! Hang Chang! Hang Chang,” revolved Tistan the name of the guest like the beads of rosary for a long spell of time.

“Albita! Albita!” escaped involuntarily from the lips of Hang Chang, like a slow, soft murmur.

“What! Albita! the holy! Namō Albita, Namō Albita,” said Tistan.

The name escaping from the lips of Hang Chang sent a quiver in all the limbs of Allala, and it seemed as if the name went and touched his soul like a person with hands and feet. He closed his eyes and went into a trance of the memory of the name of his holy mother.

“So by faith, you belong to Albita,” said Tistan.

Yes! as best as a poor scholar can belong, you are the people who see what we describe. You live what we only think. You are what we sing, we are talkers and writers, while you are the true poets, true painters, true prophets who, in the innocence of your beautiful faith, live for ever in the full youth of your lyrical silence, Ah! what will become of us, of the scholars, we only use the nectar of life for ‘mere intellectual gargling’ so to say, while you the blessed ones drink and sip and live beauty intoxicated lives,” said Hang Chang very feelingly.

“Ah! what, we poor people who understand nothing, We are like children who know as much as we are told. You understand more, see more, sense more, feel more and know more,” said Tistan.

“One thing that has struck me is that the best Buddhist life is still aglow in noblehearted shepherds like yourself. This profession of ever travelling to nowhere is a great living, moving, breathing symbol of life itself in its passage from dark to light. And you live the life that the Boddhisatvas exemplify. You are the real temples and monasteries, you are the disciples of the Lord. What is in old stones whom the Time is slowly eating up,” said Hang Chang.

“I have been searching all ‘over India and its inaccessible borders, everywhere everything available about Albita for the last twenty years, and I have been able to trace out only two portions

of her life and those two pieces too extending over many incarnations of her, other portions being un-discoverable at least by our physical eyes,” continued Hang Chang.

“How kind of you it will be, if you would tell us some of the salient features of her life as discovered by you,” said Tistan.

“Not her life, only the broken story of two monasteries Gangola and Poali kanta,” said Hang Chang.

“I find that old records about Gangola tally exactly with the knowledge a young mysteriously beautiful supernatural woman of Gangola gave me during the early parts of my travels which I had just then begun. In fact, I have been able to find nothing more than what she had told me then in a very brief interview, which was, like some one in a village showing stranger his path, it was so informal, so natural that I thought nothing about it then. All great things meet us in a simple way. She was a remarkable young lady who did then cast on me a spell of everything appearing quite ordinary and normal. In her presence, I forgot that a young girl of Gangola was speaking fluently in my own language like my own mother or sister and so homely that, at that moment, I thought nothing about it. But after years of investigation, it dawned upon me, that I had seen Albita herself by good luck in the guise of a young girl, and she put me on the right track herself about her two great monasteries. It was my ill-luck that I thought nothing about it then. But I have been fortunate to have been guided by herself in the investigation and she knows the best for me. So I do not complain very much, though my regret shall last for the whole of my life, why I could not recognise her when I saw her then. In short, she told me that the Gangola hills were heaps of an old monastery when Albita, in one of her incarnations, lived and preached Buddhism all round the country. If any one were to excavate them, he will find her image in Samadhi on the left of Lord Buddha. I have verified another fact which she told me that this August Lady lived one of her lives in the monastery of Poali Kanta. In the foundations of the North side wall of the main hall of the monastery, there is a cave now filled up by loose stones. If the loose stones are taken out, a little door opens into a small room where she sat and attained Maha-Nirvana for that birth. She was passionately fond of Mansarovar and had spent a good deal of all her lives enjoying its many aspects and shores of beauty. Then she went on saying that in the country of the king of Anardha, (Anardha is a region near great Taxila which lies, alas! now buried, about 120 miles away) about 50 miles from Anardha, the capital of that State, straight towards the East, there is a *Stupa* which should be the point to be fixed for surveying the Gangola monastery. The verification of these points and a scholar’s research into the life of this great Arahaat has taken me twenty years of hard work, and now I am taking a completely verified manuscript back to China. I will go by a short-cut route after paying one more visit to Gangola, through Nepal onward. It will take me another two years to reach home,” said Hang Chang.

“So the old, holy Albita Monastery is round about the village of Gangola in the kingdom of Anardha,” remarked Tistan with delightful surprise.

“Have you been to Mansarovar, sir?” said Allala who was sitting half erect, half lying down, as he was near the curved edge of the tent and there the height of the roof was not enough for him to sit in any other way, and except his voice, nothing of him could be seen owing to the lamp being on the other end of the tent where the elder children were making merry and the younger ones had already gone to sleep.

“Yes, I have been living there for one full summer in a small stone-built monastery. And what kept me there, was the flash coming before my eyes now and then, as if in a dream, in which I saw vividly, though for as short a time as takes a flash of the lightning to pass, the face of the lady whom I, by good luck, had met at Gangola as I have told you. And this vision and these moments of our religion kept me at Mansarovar,” said Hang Chang, “It is indeed a difficult place for human beings. It is so sublime that its scenery turns the head of a man,” added Hang Chang.

“But how did you come to know that the lady you met at Gangola was no other but Albita,” said Allala.

“Because whenever I saw her face, like a thrilling song which would flow like a stream of nectar from all the pores of my body on my tongue involuntarily went on the repetition of the name ‘Albita.’ My hair would stand at ends in ecstasy and I was lost for days and days in the flood of this inspiration. I hardly felt I had a body. I felt so light that by touching my body I half doubted if it was made of a dream or a thought. I felt I became light enough almost for flying, and in fact, I have been in those moments, I could see myself thought-carried to my far off home in China. I saw a light winging before me and there was I in it and my home and family in it. I could talk to my people and learn of their welfare. And the invariability of this sensation, whenever I saw that face, convinced me that I, in my life at least once, however unconsciously, had really met the great Arahaat, the Albita in her material body,” said Hang Chang.

“Quite right. The effect described by Hang Chang of meeting Albita is exactly what is produced when she touches the soul of her devotees, soul touching soul. Her favour bestows on man all powers divine that lie in God’s own Hands and the power of being thought carried over any vista of space and time, as Hang Chang experienced, is like the breeze of spring that gives the good news to the buds that their time of blossom is coming. Talking in our poor modes of thought, after all, the great Beings have form similar to the notes of music. It is a mistake leading to torpid superstitions to emphasise any other portrait-forms for them. It is for our sake that they put in appearances familiar to our mortal eyes, but in reality, the effects as of the mom and eve, of moon and stars, are the only objective forms that their subjective beauty has,” said Tistan.

“And the face and the preceding flash as mentioned by our honoured guest,” said Allala.

“That is only the lightning-like tearing of the veil of our mind. And the face appears only to convince the notice by its persistence, of the reality of the formless subjective meeting, and it is true, and face of the great ones, which the seer gets associated in his mind appears to him. The face of one incarnation of an Arahaat would come before the Mind’s eye of the devotees of that generation, and the face of his another incarnation to another generation. Otherwise the Arahaats are like the notes of music, as I have said by way of an incomplete and still an objective illustration, each has its own peculiar and individualistic effect on the initiated, so much so that latter on, like a trained musician, he gets the ability to say the particular names of the Higher Beings who come to meet him, from these “Effects” on him. Atleast so our ancestors have been telling us,” said Tistan.

“Albita is a whole culture, sir, in one holy name and its lyrical and inspired repetition,” said Hang Chang, “I am coming to this faith that mere repetition of Name is life, the whole of it,” continued he.



“But what kind of repetition sir! just as you had the taste of it at Mansarovar or of another kind,” said Allala.

“Quite right! Repetition of Name in the sense of inspiration. It is the Name that inspires it in a hundred new and different ways and methods and tasted and odours, and relishes, and pains, separation and unions, joys and sorrows, ups and downs of mind, the rise and fall of consciousness and all that,” said Hang Chang.

“As Boddhisatvas say-The Name heard from the lips of an Arahaat and its repetition under his jealous and continuous watch,” said Tistan.

“This is the cosmic secret of life,” said Hang Chang.

## CHAPTER XII

### LOVE

How great is the work of the great that have gone ahead of us, even if they had but beaten under their tread just a pathway for us to pass. In the trackless regions, when one loses its way, the finding of a pathway is as great as getting initiation into a new religion.

The camp of the shepherd Tistan was travelling onward towards Poali Kanta, and towards the evening the halt this time was by the side of Ganga flowing in the valley down below. The descent was of many miles in length and the footpath meandered up and down the hill like the course of a river, now taking a round turn and in its embrace taking a whole side of the hill, then rapidly dropping like a water-fall to a lower level, then spreading and then contracting again hardly enough for one person to pass, and thus the beaten path led the travellers onward. The camp followers of Tistan were going leisurely. The mat-tents were taken down in shreds and folded up, which served as coverings of little bundles that were carried by elder boys and girls about six in all, the eldest being a girl called Lavina. Two little ones, mere kiddies yet, were carried like kittens, one by Tistan himself and one by his wife on their backs, wrapped in a mat folded round them in the form of basket which was securely strapped on their own backs. Lying in these mat-baskets and covered with woollen clothes, the little ones peeped out of the lids of the baskets like the little kittens, waving their tiny hands to those who came behind them and seemed very comfortable. The boys and girls were in charge of the flock and themselves, and the Tistan's world was on foot, slowly tramping on. Allala too shared in all the work of tending the flock and of carrying a bundle on his back of the mat-tent. He was new to his work and looked a picture when he stood amongst the flock of white sheep who, by this time, begun to love him with an affectionate curiosity. They would miss him, if he would not see them for a day and come flying to him when he would appear. The Sun had not yet set, but the shades of evening were thick on the descent side of the hill, though the glaciers opposite glowed with the pink colour which made the very air tremble with the blushes of a new bride. To-day, Lavina was seeking an opportunity to meet Allala on the way, it seems, for whenever Allala was left alone on the pathway, she would come back running to him, and if he went forward she would quicken her pace too, to catch him. So for most of the day she was with him, as if she was unwilling to part from him even for a moment. Whenever she could, she would catch hold of the edge of his robe unnoticed by Allala and then kiss her own hands that touched his robe. Once Allala had to sit waiting for her on the way, as a few sheep had gone astray, and she had to go after them out of her way and drive them back to the road, and by that time, the advance party had already gone some distance ahead. As she came running breathlessly down the hill, she found him there waiting for her.

Her bosom was heaving up and down as her heart beat like a hammer within with the extra exertion.

She looked, standing in herself, there before Allala, as the very beauty of the glaciers in her tall womanly form in which the glow and the colour of youth had conspired with the uniformly round movements of the line and the curve, to enclose within the very nothings of themselves, the secret of life, which even, when thus caught did still elude the understanding of any seeker of life in its transparent depths.

There she stood the bare life itself under the thin illusory covering of mere lines and curves and colours. The red handkerchief had slipped off her head and the black clusters of her splendid crop of hair fell all about it confusion of journey in a charming disorder, and a long bluish broad-sleeved skirt covered her entire body, out of which her arms whenever tossed in air would shine like rounded rods of silver in air. And the red ribbon with which the two flaps of the shirt were to be tied were hanging untied round her neck, and thus the upper portion of her maidenly bosom was bare. Allala was about to get up to accompany her, when she hurriedly approached him and sat by his side as if tired and breathless, laying her head on his right knee, as she flung her entire body on the slender path like a heap of snow under her blue garment.

“Quite tired,” said Allala.

“Allala! not tired. I am seeking you in loneliness,” said Lavina.

“Why! I have now been with you for all these days,” said Allala.

Allala! Eversince I saw you, my eyes hungered to look at you, and my whole soul is coming nearer and neared you, till I am on your knee this moment. For the last five days, I have neither felt thirst nor hunger, I needed nothing but the draughts of my eyes full of you, you Allala. When my hands touch your garment, I feel a bliss tickling in all my blood, a thrill, a cry full of joy leaping silently in my voice. Ever since, I am full of a high desire unknown to me. Father was talking last night that you would part from us soon and go towards the Mansrovar. Allala! Allala! I cannot live without you. I need neither bread, nor raiment, nor love of father, mother, brother, nor sheep, I need you, you, Allala. I suffocate without you. I die if the draught of your eyes is delayed to be carried by my eyes to the lips of my soul. The little piece of iron has touched the loadstone, how can it be separated now. Either stay with us always, or take me with you, Allala!” said Lavina and took the hand of Allala and first put it on her forehead, then on her lips and then on her bosom under which was still thumping the great heart. Allala’s hand felt her lips burning, and her tender heart beating in infinite impatience.

“Ah: see Allala, the condition of my soul fluttering in the cage of this heart,” continued she. “Allala! look yonder, how the glaciers flame red rose and behold the colour of your own soul in that perfect loveliness,” said Allala.

“Ah! Allala, you can see the soul reflected in the glaciers but my eyes see no other soul but the one reflected in you, you, Allala, you are my soul,” said Lavina.

Suddenly she stopped, her eyes closed and tears fell like a rain of pearls and made the whole knee of Allala wet, as she still rested her head on it. Allala was in a trance of peace and Lavina was in a storm of feeling.

“Lavina!” said Allala, as he opened his eyes, “come! we go quick, as the evening is near and the camp is to be pitched.”

“Allala! today is not my turn of pitching tents. I am the guest of the evening and I must enter when everything is ready.”

“But let us go, it is getting late.”

“I cannot go. Let me rest my head on your knee. And you sit here till father comes searching for us back,” said Lavina.

“No! Lavina, let us make a move ahead. You know the path but I am new to these ways,” said Allala.

“But I cannot rise from here,” said Lavina.

“Come! I will help you,” said Allala and gave her his hand, which she caught but had not the power to hold it, the grasp loosened and she fell flat on the rock in a swoon.

Allala could not bear this, he was a bit confused, but his mental strength felt self-assured up to lifting her bodily if need be, to the camp, so he composed himself again in his habitual ever-unruffled peace that he had as naturally as the deep rivers have their smooth flow.

He bent down and found Lavina gone too far deep into the ecstasy of her own feeling to be awakened, so he sat by her side, waiting for her. After a while she opened her eyes and said, “Allala!”

“Yes! Lavina! you have gone too weak by not having taken any food for the last five days. It is cruel of you to starve yourself. Get up Lavina for the camp is yet very far from here,” said Allala.

She got up catching hold of his hand and he lifted her up bodily and put her on her legs and asked her to lean over him and follow him.

It was very late at night when they reached the camp. The old Tistan came out to welcome them. “Ah! you are the late guests of this evening to this camp and you are welcome here,” said Tistan. “I know Lavina is in full intoxication of you Allala. Her mother was telling me, she had taken nothing for the last five days, not a drop of water, and I thank you for having lent to her soul your mightily shoulder to lean upon. Lavina knows not what she is doing, her soul has overflown its banks and Lavina is drowned,” continued Tistan and saying this he embraced her and she put her arms around the old man and kissed him.

“I am quite well father! only, I love to touch the hem of the garment of Allala, his hand, his arm and I hunger for nothing but him. I have not thirst, but for the draughts that my eyes bring for me, from the fountain of light that is his face,” said Lavina.

“My daughter! it is best for us, poor people, not to think of suns, but of the lamps that accompany us from our childhood to our last day. However high we may raise our heels and stand on our toes and strain our arms, we cannot catch the Sun nor the stars. But the little lamp, you can carry about in your very bosom, light your rooms with, your path, your whole life,” said Tistan.

“But father! why do you say that. My hands reach quite upto my sky. I touch both the Sun and the stars in the body of Allala,” said Lavina.

The mother brought in the evening meals and the topic changed.

Lavina sat by the side of Allala, still semidrowned in her reverie, declining all food, and no one insisted that she should be pressed for it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SWING

One clear day, during the month of rains Mahina and Lokina put up a swing on a high Mulberry tree in the courtyard of the palace of Anardha, and went to invite the princess to regale her with a few swings on it. The princess Prakasina came out, dressed like an ascetic. Her smiles had ceased their ripple-play on her face, for the face of Prakasina, then, had the serene lustre of the peace that one sees on the face of a marble statue. Her soul had gone with Manmahaji, only her body was left at Anardha. It seemed, a flash of lightning had come from the sky, and wrapping up her soul in itself had flown away. Sudden was the vision of the beauty of Manmahaji and still more sudden was its total disappearance. But enough was left of this Great Touch of the Deep that Prakasina, the Princess, began living like Prakasina the ascetic. Pathetic was her appearance on all public and private occasions, but there was in her for all knowing eyes the grand vision of the most sublime heights of noble human grief on which heights even grief becomes strangely transfigured into beauty itself. Prakasina lived outside her body which was looked after by her two great devotees Lokina and Mahina.

“Come dear Princess!” said Lokina, “we have put up a swing for you here.”

“Lokina! I am already on the swing and my swing soars dangerously high. You need not swing me any more. Come! you sit on the swing and I swing you gently in this rain-wet breeze that is quivering caught in the long slender arms of the mulberry tree.”

“Get in Lokina! as the Princess wishes”, said Mahina. And there stood the Princess and Mahina swinging Lokina up. Lokina seated on the swing, caroled like a bird perching on a spray of a flowering twig shaken by the wing, secure in insecurity.

“Now Mahina! you get on the swing!” said Lokina Getting down after a while, “But you must swing it yourself by standing on it and pushing it onward by the downward pressure of your whole body, and then plunging it forward by giving a forward swing with your arms clutching well at the ropes.”

“Ah! that is a good proposal. We must now hear the music of the swing,” said the Princess Accordingly Mahina had her turn.

As she began swinging herself in air, there came the deep music of Mahina’s being in the thrills of the swing, as if Mahina’s soul rushed in the liquid rhythm of the dancing branches of the mulberry tree, the quivering leaves, the flying ropes and the swimming swing. Mahina was a musician that expressed very little of herself in sound. On all occasions like these, her body became a song in motion. Mahina rose speechless into the Infinite Melody. It was this unbearable sound of Mahina’s soul that, in these days of ascetic life, made Prakasina glow with her own inner radiance in deep silence. Hours passed listening to the rushes of Mahina’s music into the deep recesses of the soul. That day too Prakasina sat motionless listening to it.

After sometime, the crowd of girls of the town, hearing of the swing of the Princess, streamed into the palace-yard and gathered round their beloved Princess, vying with each other to

kiss the hem of her garment. The Princess welcomed them in the deep peace of her vow, and invited them to the pleasures of the swing. The girls had their turns and the Princess, Mahina and Lokina began helping each one of them to full and fuller swinging in air. Thus, the whole day was spent with the girls of the town, the Princess being particularly anxious to kindle their minds and hearts with the richness of divine joy. Much was given them by the Princess and the girls went home knowing not what they had got by this simple contact, except that they were very happy and felt very light. They were much too excited, for any 'doings' and tasks for the evening. They felt a superior kind of indolence of high pleasure, which refused all work. They neither ate nor drank nor slept. Each one of them flung herself in a quite corner melting away, away, as they were, into the infinite. Their parents saw that their girls were lying in Nirvana, having seen the Princess that day and nobody disturbed them. The girls sat motionless like statues of Buddha in their worshipful repose and ecstasy.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE INVISIBLE ROBBERS

“Mahina” said Lokina, “People talk of religion, they know it not, otherwise to them, nothing else could be sweeter than religion. In fact for those who know, nothing else is.”

“Lokina!” said Mahina, “you have seen Truth. Unless people see truth, drink truth, eat truth, religion, or for matter of that anything else is with them only a subject of elevated talk at times. After the passion of talk is over, the man frantically grasps the realities with both his hands, and prays to himself to be saved from his elevated talks.”

“Lokina! how lucky are we that we have found Truth. Religion is the *touch* of the great Ones. Did you not see how all the girls of the town were filled with Nirvana apparently by mere playing of the princess with them on the swing. How this touch of the Princess gives us every thing. You see, we are women, and they say, it is natural for us to think of men, but for all these years, so ceaseless has been the streaming of this volatile liss from every pour of mine, that I have no leisure of thinking of any other pleasure, for, every moment my own joy kills me, and I faint away away! I never feel I have a body. Everything else seems low, low! I feel I am on heights, on still higher heights everyday. The pull is not towards the earth, it is towards the stars. I feel going up and up.”

“Quite true Mahina!” said Lokina, “ but every body and every object is the enemy of religion. My very seat steals my peace out of me. The air takes it. Whatever and whosoever touches me takes away something out of me. Unless the princess and the King’s favour saves us, the danger of losing it, is as great as the surety of finding it from these Great Helpers. When the religion is stolen by these invisible and visible robbers of the Life of the Spirit viz by all these objects men, women, trees, air, the very room and walls where we live—the very heights seem to sink within us all of a sudden. I sometimes do feel that the Kings of Anardha have brought in most wonderful innovation into Buddhism of bringing men and women together in this life which is more of self-realisation than of self-renunciation of old. Did you not hear the other day, when the king was talking to the Princess how the father of Manmahaji brought down this fire from the far off heavens where a great sacrificial fire has been lighted for the creation of a new religion for humanity that is come down after centuries from now? Ours is only a faint reflection from them but it has already made Buddhism something different from itself.

“But Lokina!” said Mahina, “we are as good as Buddha’s nuns, having no desire left in us for the company of men. Is it not the same thing whether we live in a nunnery, or in society with this height of life’s splendour in us?”

“Quite true, Mahina!” said Lokina, “as long as we are under the inspiration of the King and the Princess who invisibly fill our soul when it runs dry and keep us always at a certain pitch of Nirvanic bliss, it is all well with us. But when religion gets low in me, I sometimes feel within myself how fine it might be perhaps, after all, to get married, and thus get the constant support of a fine man’s love. It is good to have a support of a man, a fellow traveller on the path. I believe the Anardha modification of Buddhism is almost a new religion, which has built supports and props on high attitudes of virtue for its votaries to fall upon, when, in the case of certain weak temperaments like mine, the fall becomes a necessity. Yes, Mahina, it is a necessity of the reactions of complex



emotions, you cannot tell. And those supports in their turn are living and they lift up the fallen on their giant shoulders, till the heights are regained. Religion, in this aspect of rise and fall of self-consciousness, is also beautiful, though I admit that those who have scaled beyond the “snow-line” can never fall back. But the Initiates do. And for them, Anardha provides an infinite elasticity of “Physical supports” to rise. All human relations and society are physical supports. If the Initiates take care of not losing the vital fluid of Heaven that comes flowing into their veins by the love of the Great ones, then, the path surely lies through one *continuous ascent*. But the invisible robbers rob it away, and the novice lies exhausted, when, instead of Looking up to the Givers, being physically still an animal, he gropes for that exquisite ambrosia of life in the animal nature of his, and by so doing gets still more exhausted and sings further deep into it, till he can find no way out. Suddenly then the Anger of gods rescues him, and the gods pour the fluid again into the empty cask of his body and fill it again. Again the vision bursts upon him! Thus goes on the reaction of religion on man for centuries till he passes beyond the ‘snow-line’ and is forever liberated from the bondage of animal life. Blessed are they who even know this noble struggle, for beyond it is liberation. Saved are they, for it is the gods saving them through an eternal welfare. Time is an Illusion. What appears centuries to us is only a winking to gods.”

“Lokina! I never knew religion in this struggle. But how great is thy sense of its process. It has been a whole training of a life to me in a moment.”

“Mahina! how could you? Albita herself took you on your knee. You are the emancipated, living far above the snow-line up on the snows. I am talking of the life in the valley, and how people like me struggle to ascend miserable ascents near about, and how proud they feel, if they gain a low summit, and how the valleys pull them back and how the gods continuously pull them up.”

“Lokina! Do you think of your marriage then?” said Mahina laughingly.

“Yes, Mahina! I am waiting for a beautiful enough man to come out of nothing. And I feel it will be after the return of Manmahaji to Anardha. So far I have seen no man, all are little dirty animals grovelling like hogs in the mud pits.”

“Lokina! I am feeling very anxious about the Princess. She might reduce herself to a skeleton by her now of self-renunciation.” Mahina! here is suffering without suffering. Prakasina is not pining, as they say a bird pines for its mate when separated from each other. Manmahaji is the Temple of God and Prakasina ever since she has seen him, is burning like an incense at his alter, in His Name, in His Memory. As Manmahaji has gone as the King was telling me, for twelve years, for a life of quiet contemplation somewhere near Mansarowar, so is the Princess Prakasina gone to the hidden attitudes of her own self for self-preparation for the great work that lies before her as the future Queen of Anardha with Manmahaji as her king. *Anardha* is religion, inspiration, it is humanity, it is service, it is liberation for mankind from all sorrows, it is divinity. You and I need do nothing, only swallow the pearl-sparks thrown to us by the king and the Princess, but those who have to lift up the burden of the earth, have to do what we can never dream of. They have to work through hundred fires and a thousand waters and rise above through a million kinds of self-conquests and self-surrenders and self-affirmations and self-renunciations to those heights from where their mere sight pulls nations of men up as the moon pulls up the sea. The king knows every thing about this separation and I dare say princess herself knows, but so great is the love and worship of both for Manmahaji, that knowledge availeth not, and they pine like two simple human beings for him. The pining of these gods is sacred, is sublime, they are burning themselves in quiet

un-suffering-suffering. They may be reduced to skeletons, they may seem to cry like ordinary human beings but it is all their vow of renunciation in love. They don't suffer, it is the suffering of humanity they have taken upon themselves," said Lokina.

"Lokina! you have understood well. They know what is happening. Knowledge keeps the life a flame, otherwise both of them would have left their bodies and gone where Manmahaji is. This pang of separation is great Renunciation and is willingly being borne like the flame of sacrificial fire. It has in it the familiar reflections of Tathagata himself renouncing Yashodhara. Religion does not ripen without this renunciation. It is the salt of all true religion.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE KING VISITS GANGOLA

The king Jasmanji was seated on the top most point of the little hills near Gangola and round him was an assembly of men and women come from all parts of the country round about to see the king. This time the Princess was not with him. Hours passed in wondrous silence of peace and every one felt a hundred Ganges of Nectar flowing into his heart and out of it. The snowy Himalayas filled their minds and sublime heights of No-thought, no-where, no-why shone like peaks of diamonds under the blushes of the Sun till they felt the whole Himalayan regions, their freshness and their perfume in themselves. As the king opened his eyes he said "Have you seen the great Himalayas that shine within you. Over its golden peaks, make your huts and live there. The vision precipitated in you of the Himalayas is the token that Manmahaji is on his visit to you this hour, and to his old home of Gangola. Whenever you feel these supreme heights in you this sublimity of joy, rest assured, you are meeting Manmahaji soul to soul. It is not poetic fancy, but a real meeting."

"Sire! When will Manmahaji come and where has he gone?" said one of the audience.

"My friends! great Ones alone know the right time of their coming and going. What can I say about it? But despair not he will come. Rejoice that Manmahaji is coming."

"Today we are sitting on the sacred spot where Albita passed her earthly days in one of her incarnations. This knowledge has come up to the surface now through the labours of the Chinese scholar Hang Chang who was on a visit to Anardha the other day. He explained how the great Arhaat brought the glimpses of a new religion from the far off Heavens. He said centuries after this, this Heaven's inspiration could come down in its full effulgence on this very land, some 100 miles away from this spot between the two rivers. It would then be known as the Religion of Discipleship; and all of us would return from Heaven in company with the great Teacher again on this earth. We are all disciples of that great system, projected on earth on the great Arhaat! Blessed be the name of Albita, for she has made all nunneries ridiculous before the elevated inspired choice of a freed woman as the woman now is in the kingdom of Anardha. This is all due to Albita and her Great Master. People of perfected choice need no restraint, and in fact nor do need any restraint even those of the imperfect choice, for both shall transgress all limits of restraint when they are driven to do so by circumstances beyond their own control. Restraint in our system is the restraint a perfected choice, it is the highest freedom. Any other restraint is meaningless. Great Albita saw this and made it all a living faith in the creed of Anardha which, in one word, means association with the liberated souls who live on the unknown heights of joy and peace and Nirvan. Just as this bliss you are now experiencing is due to the presence of Manmahaji at this moment with us, similarly the saints of Anardha-simrin enjoy the presence of assemblies of the holy beings and their joy is continuous. This ever-inspiring but invisible company of the Blessed Ones is what we know as *Satya Sanga*.

"How is our beloved Princess, Sire!" said an old lady of Gangola.

"She is burning quite steadily like a lamp that is unmolested by the wind," said Jasmanji.

"And my daughter, Mahina" said another old lady of Gangola.

“Mahina, Mahina, is a song that seldom finds its sound. Her fingers touch the strings of the flowing rivers and at her touch the moon-beams sound the un-heard and the solar rays fall in a heap of roses. Mahina! Mahina!” said the king, ‘is the great melodycreator.”

The king lifted his eyes to the sky, there was a tear in his eye, and he just murmured between his lips-”Here at last he meets” and saying this, he rose to go, when all the people followed him down the hills to the village of Gangola.

Here all the maidens of the village came singing to receive him and garland him.

“My daughters!” said the king, ‘the Princess Prakasina wishes you to come to Anardha and spend a week with her. She wished me to convey her invitation to you.”

“We will go to see the Princess, it is our good fortune she remembers us still. We have not yet forgotten her last visit to us. How she always comes in thought and sits on the throne of our hearts and makes us each a palace of Anardha.” said all together.

“My daughters! come whenever you please,” said the king as he was getting on his horse and saying this he rode away towards the capital.

The king had not gone far when he met four elderly people on horses, who came all the way from a province of Anardha, known as Sthalan, lying towards the North-west of Gangola to meet the king. The king stopped his horse, and they gathered round him getting down from their horses and said “Sire! our country is getting dry. The water in the wells is going down, the little rivulets are drying fast, and we had no rains this year. There is a great scarcity of water.”

“May Albita have mercy on you my friends! I did notice during my last visit to that part of the country, that it was looking dry. I found that the water level may soon get lower and so it has atlast happened. There is hardly anything that the king can do, if the hearts of the people become dry of the love of God. The scarcity is not a calamity but a symptom. My friends what can I do, if you have of your own free choice lost touch with the living Ones, the great Cloud Senders- They rain mercy, it is not rain! They send you their love, it is not golden corn. There is the Higher World of the Great Beings, as real as this on which you and I live. It is no dream of idealism, it is no mind-born fiction, it is the veriest realism to live in faith, in love and in rapport with those Beings. To get out of turn with them is to invite all misery on ourselves,” said the king.

“Sire! this is quite true. A preacher from the neighbouring country has been visiting us and sowing seeds of poison amongst us. It is after long that we have just found that by his ‘learned’ contact, our hearts have run dry of faith. The preacher is extraordinarily honest, beautiful, good and learned, in many ways great, but we find that he is dead and his contact is poisonous,” said the four elders of Sthalan.

Quite true my friends! though you kept his preaching and presence a secret from me, I had felt that my people were slowly becoming dry of heart without their knowing, but I saw no opportunity to offer you my help as when you desire to listen to the siren strains of a new preacher like that. I can do nothing. Choice is always yours, not even gods dare infringe the freedom of your own choice. You see our system is not the result of any intellectual cogitations, it is the mercy of the

higher Ones. They are not creations of our mind in the sense in which these intellectualists imagine the world, the Higher Beings are real as you and I now facing each other. Their help comes to us as you help me and I help you. They are in as real a world of their own as we live in this world of senses.

“I know the new preacher is very clever and can build convincing systems of philosophy out of meagre details, can write-brilliant treatises, but he is not *living*. He is not in touch with the Higher Ones, he knows them not, nor has the eye of faith to see that real actual world alive this world, as good as our own. He has not the authority from there on his back. That is all the difference, between a mere man and a king’s soldier! I am glad you have seen him, and how one man can bring upon a whole country the great water scarcity by first bringing in the great inner scarcity of faith.”

“Sire! save us from ourselves and from him. Have mercy,” said the elders.

“My friends! things have gone somewhat beyond me. You go and request Princess Prakasina to pay a visit to your country. Gods would have mercy on you,” said the king. And they all rode together towards Anardha.

## Chapter XVI

### THE CLOUDS OF MERCY

Next morning Prakasina dressed in yellow silk, with a red handkerchief bound on her head rode on her white horse and on either side of her, rode Mahina and Lokina each on her own horse; and they all rode towards Sthalan escorted by the elders of that place. Owing to the joyous welcome by the wayside villages, the journey had to be interrupted now and then, and it was quite dark when they just reached a valley which was like a sandy gorge about two miles this side of Sthalan, situated at the front of the hills at the other end of this gorge-like passage. The torch light had already been provided by the foresight of the villagers that of their own joyous accord followed in great numbers the horse of the Princess. Late at night, the Princess reached Sthalan where the whole town came out a mile ahead with little torches in hand to welcome their beloved Princess. The town of Sthalan rang with melodious chorus of welcome that rose with a collective quiver of all the throats.

A straw-hut similar to the one usually pitched up for the king and the Princess in the Annual Fair of the people at Anardha had already been prepared and made ready to welcome the August Guest. The Princess with Lokina and Mahina on either side of her stood at the door way of the hut receiving people and casting on them her lyrical glances of deep affection. Thus did stand the Princess, giving freely the spark of love to each one that came and fell before her on the ground and then parted for the night. And every one of the town, man, woman and child not one omitted—did come and bow down to the Princess and everyone did receive again the spark of life which they had lost without knowing about it at all. As they rose blessed by the Princess, they felt, as if, they had been plugged into cold water and this holy bathing had washed off all their dirt of thought. They saw a golden singing stream entering into them rushing past their thoughts, their very blood and bone. “Feeling” or Nam that they had lost returned to them. ! They then found that they had lost the very memory of this State of Simrin-life, like the man who suddenly becomes unconscious and they found that all that they were doing or thinking or feeling after having lost their Simrin was of the domain of dead unconsciousness of death, of darkness. They saw that they had died to the life of Simrin and by the presence of the Princess, they were made alive again. They were filled with joys of self-recognition of each other and of the religion of the kings of Anardha again! The perfumed breaths of a cooling breeze blowed from the presence of Prakasina to every heart, and the streams of tears flowed down from human eyes! In an instant, as if it were, the dried up Sthalan fountained up at the Feet of the Princess.

Next morning the people woke and saw it was raining. The floods came down from the skies, the water-levels rose, the wells were refilled with water, the fields were green, and the rain-filled winds blew up and down singing Nam of the King and the Princess. There was the bustle of festivity in the very atmosphere of Sthalan. The winds and waters and fires sang the joy of the people.

The people then instinctively saw how the preacher, like a drop of acid, had spoiled a whole tank of pure white milk of their feeling. They caught hold of him, bound him hand and foot, and brought him to the Princess. He was a stray Bikkhu of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, and had come there condemning the Southern School as too categorical and imperative, being nothing but a bundle of rules for a good conduct, which nobody could follow without the joy for doing so, and that it was only the Mahayana school of Buddhism which places the lamp of joy in the human

consciousness, and in the light of that inner radiance the devotee gets the heart to follow the noble eight-fold path of the great Tathagata. He had overwhelmed the town with his rhetoric, logic, learning and scripture-quoting. Text after Text he would chant in the wondrous melody of his sonorous voice, and this chanting would thrill the very air. The holiness of his virtuous voice magnetized the heart of the people and he fascinated his audience by the spell of his learning, music and ascetic denial of all pleasures for himself.

Seeing him, the Princess said: "Release him." This one word from her not only cut his rope-fetterings, but cut clean the strings of mind that imprisoned him in the stinking emptiness of mere intellect that thundered and foamed and ran out of itself frantically to sink back into itself, finding nothing. The Bikkhu saw that after a whole age of ascetic vigil, he had gained not even his own freedom which the very looks of the Princess had then bestowed on him and one word from her-release him-had already released him from his object mental bondage. The Bikkhu fell speechless with wonder on the ground, before the Princess.

"Rise O man! and Name Him," said the Princess and there came out a new man out of the Bikkhu, whose forehead sparkled with joy, whose temples caught fire from her all-knowing glance and his whole frame was set ablaze with bliss. Wave after wave of ecstasy of Nam overwhelmed him and he fell again speechless on the ground, before the Princess.

"This is religion, O Bikkhu! Understand and rejoice. It is life itself. Without it, all is death and darkness. Without it, the highest virtue is sin," said the Princess.

The Bikkhu again rose and this time his eyes were streaming with tears and his whole body was vibrating with an un-utterable emotion. In this very state, he bowed and went out.

It was raining outside and it was raining inside. Thus did stay for a couple of days at Sthalan, the Princess Prakasina. On their way back, they saw the Bikkhu was dancing madly on the sands of the Great Sthalan gorge and it was a wondrous sight. His feet weaved the music of his soul on the sands and as he lifted his arms in joy, it looked as if the very trees of the valley were so many arms of the Bikkhu.

He came running as the horse of the Princess entered the mouth of the gorge and strange was his obeisance to her. He fell flat on the ground and came rolling the distance of a furlong or so with the maddening joy as that of a piece of iron when it goes to its own magnet, till he fainted on the ground under the very hoofs of the Princess's horse! The horse stooped short and the Princess said: "Brother! rise! there is nothing to be excited about. Be calm. Make a hut and live in this gorge naming the king."

Instantaneously the Bikkhu rose as if he had been pulled out of a great stream and brought to the shore. The Princess cast a look at him again and said: "Be calm. Naming Him. We will meet again at this very spot. Here would spring a sweet-fountain, live on the fountain and hither would come a whole people to quench their thirst."

The Princess galloped away with her two lovely companions towards Anardha, escorted by the four Elders of the Sthalan country.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE GOLD WASHERS

The clear transparent rivulet flowed on over a hundred shades of red, yellow, blue and milk-white pebbles in the bed of the valley and to flowings invested the underlying pebbles with the precious gleams of gems. The morning rays put their caressing fingers through the rippling hair of the stream and the stream was feeling soothed. There was a huge green sward on either side, where the camp of Tistan was then now fully pitched up.

A little down the stream gold washers had begun the washing of the sands of this *Sona Nadi* and by them stood in the midst of his morning ramble, Allala watching them.

“What are you doing friends!” said Allala to a group of half-naked, bare-headed, bare-footed hill men and each of them was half-wrapped in one hand-woven, rough black woollen blanket.

“Sir! we are washing gold from the sands of this river,” said the gold washers lifting their eyes to look at Allala.

“Salutations to you sir! you be our good luck today,” said another and came and fell at Allala’s feet.

“Brother! why this. I am stranger to this process and I have just stood to see what you do,” said Allala.

“By all means! you are the God of Glaciers,” said another.

And enthusiastically, they began panning the white-quartz-powder that they had collected in their shallow wooden pans. With great dexterity, one of them began dipping the upper edge of the pan by tilting it a little aside in the edge of the running water and getting in the pan as much water as he just required and then shaking for a while the pan with both his hands like a little cradle swung between his arms and poured out the water on the ground with a skilful agility, by which operation, a good deal of the fine quartz sand was washed out of the pan. He repeated this operation about a dozen times, when a few big pieces of quartz and some large sand pieces were left in the pan. He got up and with great familiarity came to Allala and said pointing to some yellow particles at the bottom of his pan: “Look! sir, there at the bottom lie many small grains or real gold.” Then he picked up with his hand those large pieces of quartz and sand and reduced them to powder with an iron hammer and then again began the panning operation, till all the sand and stone was washed out and pure-gold particles were left behind. He took them out and collecting them in an old earthen socket of an oil lamp, went up to Allala and said: “Here is gold, sir!”

“Ah! this is gold, my friends! But why do you take all that trouble, when the very gold is scattered everywhere here by the Sun,” and he pointed on to the threads of gold that were being woven in hair of the stream, the huge blocks that were lying on the grass, the masses of the liquid gold that were flowing on the tops.



“Ah sir! that is true, that too is gold, but that is God’s gold and this is our gold. Sir! when the night falls, God takes away all his gold, but we take this gold on the palms of our hands and touch it always. There is joy in touching gold, real gold, on our own palms, sir! It is our gold, sir, for us,” said a gold washer.

“Quite right! what use is that gold to you, even if it be a big block which does not always glisten in your soul,” said Allala and left the gold washers, distributing a few smiles of his amongst them.

“They are quite right. What use is anything that is not come home to our own soul. For a few shining particles of gold to glisten in our soul, how laborious is the straining of waters that has to be done before these poor gold washers get just a ray or two for themselves, soliloquised Allala.

“And quite right was Lavina too when she said of what use was the beauty of glaciers when it was not her own. And similar was the thought of Tistan, that Beauty shining outside us is no use even when if regales us, it is not somehow made to glisten in our soul,” thought Allala.

Deeply absorbed in this trance of thought as to the personalising of the impersonal beauty, the shining philosopher reached the camp and outside the tent sat, as was his wont, Tistan knitting socks for himself, his wife and children. As Allala approached, he lifted his eyes from below his huge spectacles and looked at him and smiled welcoming him.

“These gold washers are a splendid race of man,” said Allala.

“Yes! they are the true labourers, for they labour to strain out of infinite waters, a few rays of gold, which they stick on the inside of their soul and watch them gleam in the dark of night. In the morning, those who have gold, you could see, have the very rays sparkling visibly invisibly on their foreheads. There is joy in being able to c ill a few rays of the infinite as our own,” said Tistan.

“Oh! that is why gold is held dear by man, it is the light of the soul,” said Allala.

“Not exactly, but it is the nearest approach to that light and that is why it is loved by man,” said Tistan.

“Gold and silver are in a way the *materialised light*. And what we see on the top of hills in the morning, gathers in concentrated form in their minds,” said Allala, “and that is why it is the delight of man.”

“I think so, the value of gold and silver is purely aesthetic. It is like the gems giving the light of the Sun and the Moon at dark night. After all, these beautiful colours are colours of the soul, and the soul is found of its own reflections and spreads its million hands to gather itself. The hunger for gold and silver is right and the greed too is a spiritual desire for self-Realisation, only the human eye needs to be kindled first with the Blaze of beauty that we saw the other day. The blind man gropes in darkness and all that falls in his hands is of the colour of darkness,” said Tistan.

“This reminds me again of the topic we discussed the other day, viz, the desire for beauty which we should carry with us, the Name of beauty that we should hold fast in the knots of our

soul. Love, Tistan! is also a hunger for beauty which is appeased only by the filling up of the space with Beauty,” said Allala.

“You have to carry the analogy of the gold washers a little further. How they strain the waters of the infinite to catch a few glimpses. Love is not hunger for beauty, it is the incessant labour of straining the waters of the infinite, to catch a few rays of beauty and to hold it in one’s soul as one’s own light. It is personalising the Impersonal, it is selfishing the Beauty in the image of one’s soul,” said Tistan.

“Love, then, is incessant labour to find our own share from the Infinite Beauty of God,” said Allala.

“Exactly. Some times, however we get without much effort and sometimes, we strain oceans and get nothing.”

“But straining with the gold-washing pan in hand is the holiest profession of man. It is search for the rare gleams of our own soul, our own God whose creation is a marvel, both in the round sweeps of the finite circles that we see forming before our very eyes and in the unseen curvatures of the infinite circles which we behold but in broken pieces of the great Mysterious Arches. But all comes back to from where we start and you and you hold atlast the whole of you for yourself, through all the Mayas of the finite and the Infinite. The last window opens within you,” said Tistan.

“Ah! the heroic gold washers, what a splendid profession they follow! So, sir! on the bank of this infinite glory, we have to sit like little labourers, panning its sands in the pan of our hearts and picking the little grains of gold for us that shine last of all down at the bottom there,” said Allala.

“Exactly! but love is not only labour, but fruit. So far you have been seeing it as labour, you must turn your eyes up and see to the fruits,” said Tistan.

“Yes, please! I do feel that man reduced to the sorry dimensions of himself becomes dead and yet every philosopher I met, including yourself too, though in a different way, say persistently that Self-Realisation is the greatest love,” said Allala.

“But my friend! Realities transcend words and thinkings. And it is a sorry spectacle to see men get stuck in words and floundering there in the foam of the world-sea, instead of letting their boat free on to the waves and the winds, to be carried whither they list. Self-Realisation is not any miserable shrinking to mere skeletons and sick pallor of self-starvation, but an infinite richness of colour and form and expanse and aspect and an unending variety of beauty which new to newer grows. The whole world of man, bird and beast is in the infinite spell of Self-Realisation and there never was any finale of it ever seen. And Self-Realisation is the all comprehending, an infinite scheme of life and life has a myriad feet, a myriad hands, a myriad heads, a myriad souls, an infinite infinity of Beauty to realise itself. To confine it to a grave-like cave, or a bon-fire of desire like a city, or to a golden glacier scene of serene peace is to contradict the very spirit of Truth that dwells in infinite contradiction of its own self.”

Tistan had closed his eyes in the intensity of his thoughts, his face emitted sparks of fire as he burst out into chanting:

“I am the bird and  
fowler I, the huntsman  
and the stage that flies,  
Both the steel-tipped arrow and the bow that  
shoots, the one that dies,  
I am the beaming peace of snows, the trembling  
flame of passion wild,  
I am both the honey and the flower, the black  
bee sweet around that sighs,  
I am the blue ashes that lie in place of  
love and life all-burnt,  
And I am the life’s fresh, red glow that  
rises and leaps again to die,  
And I am the stain on the face of sin, the gold  
streak on the virtue’s brow,  
I am the flash of sword that falls and I the  
head that rolls below,  
The white hand of love is mine, the innocent  
blood that stains it so,  
I am the slave that fain is slain, the beautiful  
love that slays,  
I am the doer undoing, the dead undone in  
life to come,  
I lie so warm and light on the bosom white  
of the woman I won,  
And hand and glove I sit and talk and laugh  
with the bachelor Sun!!  
I sleep so fast in rocks of old and stand to  
prayer in the tree,  
The smile of flower, the child’s first word,  
the sheep come swift to lamb-kin’s bleat,  
I am the new born blush unknowing of the  
maiden’s unkissed cheek,  
I am the stream unknown that trickles  
unseen in heart’s unlit Eavine,  
Both hope that waits and love that dreams,  
despair and faith in things Unseen.

“They misunderstand Me and they shall misunderstand me forever, who take one-sided view of Me. No time has ever contained Me, no expression has ever defined Me. I flow forever over all embankments. I carve new ways and I take new routes at every turn. I seem moving in the ant and the elephant, I seem shedding fire at night from the eyes of the lion, but I move not. I am in the heart of an Arahaat and in the sound of the little anklet that sings in the throat of the cicade, subsisting as one whole undivided, unportioned, unmoving motion supreme.”

Suddenly he stopped, the blue vein of his forehead swelled up with red blood coursing up to the crown of his forehead, his eyes closed, tears trickling down his redened joy-swollen Mongolian cheeks.

And Allala was again submerged in a new trance of a new beauty of the mind of Tistan.

As the Sun rose high the tiny wild rose-bushes on the green sward warmed up, they put forth their blossoms and round about these hedges, the two little ones of Tistan were frolicking about. Suddenly a swarm of gold- coloured butterflies flew above the roses and a hundred pair of wings began fluttering together as if beauty caught by passion itself was struggling for its release from its quivering clasps. The little children began running after them, waving their little hands up in the air and straightening themselves to their full heights to catch the gold-coloured flutter of a hundred wings. They chased this tremulous gold from bush to bush, but unable to catch it, they fell down and began weeping and violently rubbing their hands and heels on the grass, when Allala came running to see what had happened.

“Those gold-coloured flying roses that have suddenly begun to flap their petals, they have just taken their wings, these red roses that lie on the bushes! They tease us, they come close to our grasp and as we lift our hands they fly higher, these naughty roses,” cried the children and began weeping more bitterly.

Allala, looked at the swarm of fluttering wings and remarked to himself: “How poetic are the children of great poet, Tistan! These little ones are excited by that subtle quiver of the butterflies! One tuncy wonders what makes them these ‘Flying roses’ tremble and in what intense excitement!” Saying this to himself he lifted the children up on his shoulders and began running after the butterflies. Not one was caught. When all had flown away, Allala plucked a few roses from the bushes and filled the tiny hands of the children full to overflowing, saying: “Here are the flying roses, they have come back home into these flowers on the bushes!”

All this time, Lavina was sitting on the door of the mat-tent, tending a sheep sitting in her lap that had hurt its right foreleg in the previous day’s journey. She would lift her eyes and look at the face of Allala with parted lips. And occasionally, she pressed her lips together and drank the joy of it, like a mouthful of nectar and she actually felt it going down her throat.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ASCENT

Next morning the camp of Tistan was again moving forward, as it was the previous day, they were scaling the ascents of a great Himalayan pass. The snow had melted off from the lower half of this majestic mountain and this side of it was green with fir trees and their entangled undergrowth through which the silver fountains were leaping and trilling melodious songs in tune with the tinkling of the little bells hanging in the neck of Tistan's flock of sheep that slowly moved upward under their little loads of grain now and then straying just a little, to have a morsel of some green herb leaves.

When looked from below, the ascending party could hardly see the top of the mountain, without dropping their tucked up woollen caps from their heads, it was a splendid view of white snow, a little below which was nothing but the naked red skin of the mountain open to view. It looked as if a grand old man had just come out of his cottage to bask in the Sun and was letting the little tiny children these sheep, these Tistans, these Allalas and others, to scramble up his lap, as they liked.

By about noon, they reached half way where grew a centuries' old fir tree, a single solitary one that had climbed to that height and still maintained his position against many odds and round about under it, the stones were so arranged by the passing shepherds, that they almost spoke and invited every passerby to sit there and have a little rest. The good wife of Tistan, had already provided break-fast for every one from her last camp and a little fire was kindled by collecting together the dried branches of the fir and the juniper and the pine needles to get hot water with which they were to take their repast all together.

The day was fine and the sunlight slipping from the white locks of the mountain fell through the fire needles on to the stones like a rain of sparks and one almost wished to collect the silver that was scattered so profusely on the stone floor. Tistan's children actually bent to pick up the white shining spots, but they vanished on their touch from there and appeared on the back of their hands. The children cried with joy "Oh! what beautiful things creep on our hands,"- but as they moved, the beautiful things again slipped off like so many illusions of the child-mind on to the floor.

Allala was feeling concerned in seeing Lavina not having taken a morsel of bread nor a mouthful of water all these days. Whenever he looked at her, her eyes would turn upward under her eyelids and would almost shut with joy, the blue vein of her forehead would swell up, her face would glow up like a burning fire and her lips would vibrate with love of Allala. Seeing her condition growing every day worse, he bethought to take the earliest occasion to suddenly bolt away from there. While the party was scaling the steep path, Lavina would go ahead by some short cut and sit on a projecting boulder for a long while looking at Allala as he went climbing up. As they would approach near, she would run again by some other secret way and get to another position of vantage for drinking the draughts for her nectar, the young Allala.

The two boys of Tistan had meandered in other directions while ascending the peak and as they came, they poured forth from out of the folds of their garments, a few blue pieces of stones

before the old Tistan and said, "Father! a whole side of a hill has slipped, as if cut by a saw and from the steep-cut side of the rock, we gathered these stones! How fine blue they are!"

"They are sapphires and very large crystals too," said Tistan, "how wonderful and how precious!"

Every one came to look at them but Lavina who had already gone ahead. Tistan said that they fetched a good price in India and next time as they would go down they would fill a few of sheep bags with these stones.

"It is due to Allala having met us, that we have suddenly found such a rich fortune," said the wife of Tistan, who had gone deep into a mood of thankfulness.

"Yes, my women! this good fortune is certainly due to the sacred contact of our camp with the dust of his feet. But greater than all fortunes is the man whom we have met. What are fortunes, what are gems, what is wealth, but death without his love," said Tistan.

"I am not thinking of poor, dead sapphires, I am thinking of him, the greatest gem God has given this time. I am wondering how many mines of sapphires have yet to open to our view, within us and without us! This chance discovery of sapphires is only a dumb voice proclaiming his greatness," said the wife of Tistan.

"Boys! keep these in your baskets! we will gather these stones on our way back. How can one take extra loads when ascending these heights," said Tistan.

"But father! how much one can take at all, we found almost a whole rushing stream of these blue flowers, flowing down and falling in a pretty cascade. The very sight satiates the eye! We might take a few crystals down, but all the beauty shall remain behind. How could any one take the scene of the blue cascade in which tremble with you the rays of the Sun," said the boys.

"People in the Plains are just as you were when little babies, it is the coloured stones that, given in our hand, stopped your cries, my boys!" said the mother.

Towards the night they reached the top and the camp was fixed on the snows for that evening. It was full moon light, night and wherever the eye went, it was a white expanse of snow on which lay adream the soft moon light. Allala was struck dumb by this exquisite silence of Nature, not a sound but that of the red stream of his own flood coursing through his veins, echoing and reechoing its own sound in Allala's heart—beat. In that wondrous silence, one could almost visualise the calm eyes of nature like those of the Sphinx itself, fixed on every one!

Allala ran on the snowy expanse for he saw a woman standing at the farthest end, wearing snow-white garment and he saw a white hand beckoning him. As he reached the spot, he found there was no one. It was an illusion.

It was midnight, every body else had gone to rest, but Lavina who felt very warm inside the tent and had come out of her bed to have a fresh air under the moon. Allala was meditating and taking turns on the snow ever since his arrival without having been disturbed by any one. Lavina ran out of the hut and began running, running on the expanse of white snow. Allala slowly followed her, half-doubting if she was in her sense, both met. Lavina ran into his embrace in fury of her passion and swooned away. Allala held firm in his embrace and sat down on the snow, a little bit confused at this extreme tension of Lavina's mind, which from the sort of embrace she gave him, seemed to be a bit off itself.

It was after half an hour or more that Lavina opened her eyes.

“Allala! No! Manmahaji! Don't you recognise me? I am your old disciple. I am yours from eternity. I love you. I cannot live without you. I am yours, yours forever,” said Lavina and she looked strangely distracted like an insane girl for this brief little moment.

“Lavina! do you love me? Will you do what I tell you?” said Allala.

“Yes! I will do except one thing that you should not ask me to renounce you, for then I will die here this moment, this moment. I am at the point of a sweet death. Ah! Allala!! let me die in your embrace. What could be better, what could be sweeter? In your embrace Allala. I wish to be eternally here in your arms. I wish to live or die here. Don't leave me. I know you propose to fly away tonight from me. Don't leave like this. I wish to go with you as your disciple. I wish only to be near you, even at a distance, with the stray chance of one look a day at you. I will not vex you with my presence, I know I am ugly, unworthy of you, but I bum with love, I am all love for you; my love is most beautiful, most precious gem. I will keep this gem for you in my heart concealed. Grant, that I should accompany you, wherever you go and follow you behind, even at a distance if you please, but my one look a day should bind me eternally with you,” said Lavina. And clutching wildly at the hem of this garment and biting it with her teeth, she continued, “I cannot live without you. Have mercy on me. If you go, go burying me forever in your warm embrace.” And here she rubbed her head against his bosom and took both his hands and enclosed her face in their fold made by herself. The palms of Allala felt the hot ears and temples of Lavina as if she had high fever and the tears were wetting her cheeks and his palms Allala sat with his eyes closed, not knowing what to do, nor thinking what to do. He gave himself to her intense moment of joy in which she was crooning like a child. The whole night passed. The dawn rose on the edge of the sky in her pink rose clothes. For her welcome, from the sky fell the pillars of light covered with pink rose silk, whose lower ends were lost in the blue air below like the pillars of the building standing in blue

water on the sea shore. And from the surface of the blue air, around the lower ends of these pillars, appeared rose sprays of pink colour bearing crimson flowers and there was a carpeting of the whole sky floor, with flowers made of the pink light.

The dawn was about to appear in her best attire, but Allala sat all the night through and was still sitting motionless with his back towards the East, for Lavina had slept in his lap and he did not wish to make the slightest movement, lest it disturbs her repose which she had obtained after more than ten days! The Sun came up and Lavina was still asleep and Allala was holding her in his arms as a mother holds a babe.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CAMP PARTING

Inscrutable are the ways of life, whence they come, whither they go and where they lead, few can say. Tistan, that very day, had decided to request in lieu of all his love for Allala, to save the life of his daughter which was in danger, by accepting her as his disciple. He knew within himself that she could not be his wife, for Allala was a born Arahaat and had the love of a million disciples, men and women, in store for him, it would be cruel to ask him to spend his life in his poor camp as his son-in-law. He knew that would amount to depriving millions of his great love.

So when Allala and Lavina both entered the camp in the morning, Lavina was red as a rose and Allala white and pale as the outlying snow.

“Allala! what ails you?” said Tistan.

“Nothing sir! Lavina got out of the tent at midnight and I went to her rescue. She slept in my arms and I did not disturb her sleep,” said Allala.

“You are all white, why?” said Tistan.

“No father! he is not white. Don’t you see he is red like a rose? See carefully again!” said Lavina and she turned blue white, and Allala was burning like the red fire of the rose!

“Excuse me! I had mistaken one for the other. I meant Lavina, you are pale white,” said Tistan.

“Father! I have not been well last night. I had a sort of fever and I felt warm inside the tent and I went out, afterwards I know nothing,” said Lavina.

The good wife of Tistan came on running and picked her child, Lavina, was almost dead with cold and gave her the warmth of her motherly bosom. Soon the children came in running and Lavina was warm again and there was a moment, of merriment in the boisterous shouts and cries of the little children.

“Father! Allala has been asking yesterday the passersby, if here it was the parting of ways for Mansarovar and he thinks of leaving us,” said Lavina.

“Daughter! Allala is the prince who has been living with us in the disguise of a humble disciple and the time has come for him to take leave of us and go to Mansarovar. He has yet to complete his great task,” said Tistan.

“But father! send me with him,” said Lavina with child— like simplicity.

“But how can Allala take you and where? You see the lamp is not responsible for the death of moths even if they be thousands a night. The lamp burns and the moths die,” said Tistan.

“But I am not going to be his moth, I am also a lamp and I wish to burn in company with him and blend my little light with his great one,” said Lavina.

“But Tistan! she is a simple girl and knows not the strange vicissitudes through which I have yet to pass to an unknown destiny,” said Allala.

“Allala! I lay no blame on my daughter’s door for all this her clinging to you, nor I blame you. The other day, when we saw the glaciers together, what we felt towards the beauty behind the veil, my Lavina feels towards you, the beauty before the veil. I would for the sake of my poor daughter, request you to accept her as your disciple and I know she will be always your devoted disciple and aid you in her own humble, poor way,” said Tistan.

Suddenly a tempest swept over the calm mind of Allala and he closed his eyes and sat silent for a long time. When he opened his eyes, his decision was made and he said; “Tistan! I am ready to do any service that I can to your noble daughter.

“Take her with you and make her your disciple and keep her under the shade of your great golden eagle-wings, safe for eternity,” said Tistan.

“If such is your pleasure, I accept it,” said Allala.

“There are souls,” said the good wife of Tistan “who trail in their very shadow a million hearts, like the bushy sweep of the comet light that rolls in many a star. My poor daughter has got into one of those great cosmic whirl-pools, and Albita be with her, for to be a wife is easy, much easier than to be a disciple.”

“Well said! good lady! there are souls that draw a million souls around them to keep them at various distances near and far, under the magnetic spell of their Beauty, and give them one great cosmic swing in the Heavens and in one moment, as if it were, a new solar system appears in the sky of the mind of Time,” said Tistan.

“I know Allala is going to attract a million women. For I, though an old woman now, also think of going with him, I feel so irresistibly drawn towards him; but the flesh is weak and your face, Tistan! excites in its ripe old age a greater passion of compassion and through compassion, my self-renunciation than my self-attraction towards Allala.” Saying this, the old woman opened her arms and embraced Allala full to her heart’s content, and went pressing his again and again against her old bosom, and revolving her tongue inside her mouth in a liquid nectar that had exuded filling her whole mouth by this involuntary passion for Allala! “Ah! how sweet!! his touch is Nectar. No wonder my daughter has gone well nigh mad after him,” said she.

“Allala! my wife is quite right. You are that person who would draw towards himself millions of men and women. The day will come when, in your very shadow, would live a thousand pairs of lips singing your name and opening their mouths for drinking a glimpse of your face,” said Tistan.

Next day, Allala was ready to go and Tistan while bidding him farewell said: “You need no more instructions as to the way to Mansarovar for Lavina knows all the ways. So I hope my daughter will be useful to you.”

As he was saying this to Allala, Lavina was taking farewell by embracing every one of her folks and taking farewell from every sheep her brothers, sisters and mother. At last she ran in Tistan's embrace, saying: "Forgive me father! I have been rude to your old age. I have caused you sorrow at my parting from you."

"No Lavina! This is as Lord ordains. Farewell my child! you have taken upon yourself the most difficult of lives to live. Lord be with you and may all your ancestors help you in your holy resolve," said Tistan and began crying like a baby in the embrace of his daughter.

The tears of the old man fell on the long black maiden tresses of Lavina and glided over them like pearls.

The father thus decorated his daughter with all the stars of Heaven! This was Tistan's dowry to his daughter who had taken her destiny as if it were in her own hand.

Over the expanse of the snow, beyond the inner-Himalayan heights, there lay the un-beaten road to Mansarovar and the lake lay a distance of about fifteen days' journey from there. Kailash could be seen like an upturned white fan, hanging from the blue ceiling of the sky, and Kailash is one of the Nature's Temples built on the waters of the Mansarovar. And going towards Mansarovar on the snows were seen two figures clad in red, woollen thick russet gowns made of furs, one taller than the other, and the other a bit stouter, though the latter was more sure of step. And with them, there was little flock of about twenty white sheep slowly following them, with a black, bushy dog that appeared from a distance, to be a bear, till they all vanished in the blue sparkling horizon.

## CHAPTER XX

### TO MANSAROVAR

Allala too had donned the clothes of an Himalayan shepherd the thick furs, the leather socks and long Tartar boots, the woollen cover-all caps. With about twenty goats laden with provisions for themselves, sufficient grass, grain and salt for the journey of fifteen days on foot and Ansi the black dog. Allala with Lavina, was now quite fitted up for a sojourn round about Mansarovar.

They both lived on the milk of the sheep and wherever they could see, in those days, morsels of herbage in the valley for the sheep, they would let the sheep go down, while they would encamp there for the day.

As they went on foot from day to day, Lavina did not disturb the loneliness of the mind of Allala, beyond an occasional look of love at him, a smile, and with it an offering of a hot cup of milk at the fixed time. And whenever Allala felt like being social, Lavina would drop her head on his knee and rest for some time. Whenever she touched his knee with her head, she got intoxicated with joy and became quite lifeless in his love. Her daily sustenance thus was a loving look at him, two smiles at the times of morn and eve when she presented him with milk to drink, and her work was tending the sheep and looking after the tentless camp of Allala under the blue sky, of this great man still unknown to the world and to himself, in their solitary march to Mansarovar.

During this journey, Allala would hear strange music which would fill his eyes with tears of joy and his heart with an exquisite nectar, and he was, as if, floating in the blue. And Lavina was tireless in her energy, she needed nothing, it seemed, she never slept day and night and worked like a ministering angel to her Allala.

One day Allala asked Lavina: "Lavina: you do not seem to rest at all, don't you feel tired, you go the whole day on foot and the whole night you seem to be gazing at the stars."

"Allala! living with you in my heart, in my eyes, in my thought, how can I sleep or rest or feel tired. Enough to me is that one hour sleep that you, out of your great pity for me allow me on that all-comfortable pillow of your knee," said Lavina.

"Your love is great, Lavina! It is your own love. What is in me, but a desire for nothing at all, it seems," said Allala.

"To me poor girl, one look a day at my Allala is enough nourishment for me and I desire nothing else," said Lavina.

"Lavina! you have been here many times before I believe. Is this the haunt of any invisible Musicians? I hear strange music the whole day and night ever since we have left your father's great Tistan's camp."

"Ah! not that I know of. Do you hear music even now," said Lavina.

"Yes!" said Allala.

“Let me see if I can also hear,” and quickly she came close to his knee and dropped her head on it and instantaneously she fell into deep sleep. Stars were shining above.

“Poor girl! she is untiring in her efforts for me and how much does she manage to accomplish in one day. She has gone to deep rest,” thought Allala.

And there came the soft ringing of a song in his ear, as if some one was playing upon his flute at a distance. And Allala too absorbed in the melodious sound, gave himself upto sleep.

By the side of these two sleeping children, unknown to them, there was Albita, watching them. It was her lullaby that had put Allala to sleep and she had cast a deep spell of repose on Lavina, as the poor girl was torn into bits for the sake of Allala.

Deep, indeed, was the sleep of two great slumberers and the mother Albita sat there, loving them. It was Lavina who woke first and as she lifted her eyes from beneath her own curls that had come over her eyes with her head still on Allala’s knee unmoved from there, she saw a lady sitting by the side of Allala and unafraid she fixed her baby-like gaze on her. Albita looked at her with infinite motherly love and she slowly rose and came and sat by her. Allala was still asleep.

“Well done! my daughter! you have accompanied the boy in these regions. He was born of me at a village called Gangola in the kingdom of Anardha. I am his mother. He thinks I am dead and he has come searching for me in these regions as he was so directed by an old man in Gaya. The old man was only a book-saint and he knew nothing of life itself. I then directed his footsteps to your father’s camp and I am glad he lived so long with him. Your old father is an adept and his eyes see behind the veils at times. It so happened I was called away sooner to these regions and had to leave him there. He had grown well, see how beautiful he looks with his curls resting on the white snow. I left for him a bundle of relics which, as you see he always carries on his back and if even you ask him to give it to you to carry, he would be cross with you. I know it causes you both curiosity and a pain and you wish to carry it for him but do not touch him there. That is the bundle I left for him. It contains a necklace of five rubies which I had reserved as an offering for one whom you would know later. And there is a rosary of sapphires, big large crystals for him and the bundle is wrapped in my robe which of course, was done by the old saint of Gangola with whom I stayed I have satisfied your hidden curiosity and you should not discuss this point with him,” said Albita.

“Your name, mother?” said Lavina and half afraid looked towards Allala, lest her talks might disturb his repose.

“Don’t be afraid, daughter! He was very much distracted and so I have put him to rest and he would not wake just now! My name is Albita,” said she and smiled at the girl, holding her face in both her hands and kissing her forehead.

“This one kiss sent Lavina thrilling with a musical throb of the life of the whole Universe come to her. She looked up and the Heavens were full of thousands of Bright Faced Figures, in every hair of whose there were strung a thousand suns and she could look at them fully, her eyes were not dazzled, so sweet was the light like the soft sunlight as when it is seen reflected from below the surface of water.

“This is the other world beyond death, my daughter! This is life beyond, what they call, death. I belong to this great Assembly. But I have put on a shade of this material body that your material body may touch and feel that it is real and not a dream or a fancy, at least to you as much real as anything else, touch me, hold my hands, feel me as you see and touch, for example, your’s Allala”, said Albita, “even the Bright figures you see there have assumed the shades of forms of light and fire for planting faith in you,” continued Albita.

“Is the music that Allala hears from here, mother!” said Lavina.

“Yes, my child! The Assembly of the Enlightened Ones is in me and I in the Assembly and it is the sound of my invisible companionship with you. You too will hear this music from now, this music would be your spiritual sustenance, warming you when it is cold, cooling you when it is hot and curing any sickness of mind in the form of doubt which might steal on you unawares. No hunger nor thirst would torment you. Whenever you hear this music you must know I am with you. And you will hear this whenever you think of me or you need my help.

But you must keep your sheep and your dog for you must live with all these doors of secrets revealed to you all-closed in the disguise of simple human beings like your father and mother. They are my children. I am well pleased with them and you understand there is nothing to say, nothing to be proud of, nothing to be vain about, nothing to feel any superiority over others. It is a life behind one kind of veils, as those of simple men of your earth, on the material side is a life behind another kind of veils. Let us say both are illusions of Maya of different kinds. There is nothing to boast of, there is nothing extraordinary, it is all as simple here as the flowing of a stream downward there. Only those who do not know make much and consider it all so extraordinary and supernatural. The kind of love you bear towards Allala is the light of our eyes here. Some little difference only in kind and in colour nothing more. Now is the time for him to wake up and I am rising out of this shadow that I superimposed on myself to enable you to see me,” said Albita and vanished instantaneously.

The girl thought it was a dream and clutched at air to see if she was a reality. But as soon as the doubt entered her mind, she raised her eyes and there she saw her ascending in air towards Heaven and the Bright Figure looked back and smiled at her and waved her arm at her. Lavina fell on her knees, no more doubting the reality of Albita. She was kneeling down on snows, her face was transfigured, her eyes lifted heavenward, tears dropping in one rainy current unknown to her and her every hair was laved in nectar and her very skin resounded with a million voices singing

*Albita, Albita.* Her heart that till now in that deep Himalayan solitude beat like a hammer changed its gait and there was the same rhythm, in it which was in the gait of the zephyrs blowing from the East. Lavina sat once thus in tune with the whole of Nature. As Allala got up he was wonderstruck and saw that marvellous statue of Sakyamuni, a living statue, pulsating with the same super-heavenly music that had put him to such a sleep. With bated breath he gazed for hours at her. It was Buddha in Samadhi, it had the same effect on him.

In his heart of hearts, he felt a bit reconciled with himself that he had, after all, been good in not deserting such an angel as Lavina. Lavina was in the highest state of Niravana that is possible to man in body. He dared not disturb her. The music had stopped into a still more musical silence wave after wave deluging his mind, but he thought, it was no other than the music of his great love of Lavina.

“I see the secret now. Whenever I ask her about music, she comes and puts her head on my knee and then the music begins which puts me to sleep. The music emanates from her innocent heart,” he thought, “it is her love accompanying me!”

The Sun had come up high and shone full on the roseate face of Lavina. To prevent the glare on her eyes, Allala stood erect shading her face from the dazzling white. And there woke Lavina from her deep reverie and said; “Allala! have I slept long?”

“No Lavina; you are praying, you are singing, you are holy. It is your music I hear. I am sorry to have been a bit hard on you. Pardon me, if you find me severe. I am an orphan, Lavina; and orphans are always like me. I have not got even one kiss from my mother, so I am severe. It is temperament, Lavina; forgive me,” said Allala.

Lavina ran to him and unconsciously and involuntarily embraced him and Allala held her tight in his embrace also unconsciously and involuntarily.

“I am yours, Allala!” said Lavina.

“Yes, Lavina! you are mine! Why do you say again and again,” said Allala.

“I only pray again and again that you might not desert me. Now that I have left my camp and you are my camp eternal.”

“But, Lavina! which camp you have left, the whole of that camp is pitched in your heart and I am in that camp and you are carrying me in the music of your love,” said Allala.

“Allala! you are kind. It is your mercy,” said Lavina. And they both began trudging along Ansi and the twenty sheep following, the view of Mansarovar opened before them, after about two more days of this mystic tramp.

And like two little children delighted with a new toy, they began crying with joy at the sight of the great Lake on the roof of the world-Mansarovar! Mansarovar!!”

And there was the most glorious scene of Mansarovar lake about 50 miles in circumference on the roof of the world, with the divine peak of Kailash to the North and the Giant Mandhata (25,400 ft. high) to the South, mirroring themselves in the transparent bosom of the lake.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE CAVES OF MANSAROVAR

Mansarovar by the time, they reached there, was deserted by all the pilgrims that used to gather there once in five years during the summer months, though a few stone-huts and dug-outs still bore the signs of a recent human occupation. That corner of Mansarovar where they were encamped, was on the side of the village-population of the surrounding country, though the nearest habitation was at a distance of thirty miles down below in the valley.

Winter had already set in and Lavina with the usual foresight of a woman, spent her days in reconnoitring the surroundings to find suitable caves for Allala and herself to live in, as she knew from her father Tistan, of the existence of warm caves near about the place where they were then encamped, in which the old Buddhist disciples passed their winter in comparative comfort.

At last two good caves were discovered by her and as she went in, she saw Mother Albita leading her on. "My daughter! this cave is for your Allala. It is very ancient cave, in which many a great Arahaat and Adept lived in deep rapturous silence, one after another, and the very air of these caves has attained to Buddhahood. As you have seen, the approach is so perilous, that no one comes this side and this is the loneliest spot on the face of the earth. And see, here is a rock which is as warm as the human body, perhaps a little warmer. Touch it my daughter! and a little further up, there is another about twice as warm as this rock. Here water can be boiled. And here is a 'cup-spring' full of water, it is a wonderful little fountain, it can never be emptied, nor it overflows. You cannot have more from it than one palmfull of water and that palmfull of water is always there. You should make the first rock as the Asan-(seat of contemplation) for your Allala. And when winter advances, he could shift it further on to this rock. But the whole cave is kept warm by gods, and it is made comfortable for the followers of the religion of *Nam* and *Dhyanam*. Not on moonlit nights, but on dark nights, you will find a few boulders embedded in the ceiling of this cave, emitting faint light like jewels and just enough for a man wrapped up in his own meditations. This is small cave comparatively but it is an ideal one. "My daughter! come out, now I will lead you to your cave and the cave for your sheep and Ansi," said Albita and Lavina went following her out. Towards the right of the cave, a little towards the north, on to a lower terrace, Albita entered in, Lavina following her.

"My daughter! this is the cave for you to live. In this too, you have all conveniences. You have a little more water than that in your Allala's cave, and this spring too is enclosed in a rock-cut basin. In this cave, the spring will be a very sweet companion to you. There yonder, you could boil milk keeping it for a while on that rock. You see, a little smoke is coming out of its minute fissures. Just place your hand here and see how hot it is! And further on, there is a little warmer place for your sheep. You can pen them there. And in that cave for the sheep, there is a rock over which comes oozing a black stuff from below the earth, it is their food. They will never be sick or sorry and they will take of it just as much as they want. During the winter months, it is an ideal food for animals, it keeps them warm and strong Ansi will also relish it." Lavina followed Albita out of the cave, but on coming out of the cave, she was alone, and thought that it was but a vision in which Mother led her to this discovery.

Thus the two caves were discovered and Allala and Lavina began their residence in them.

These caves were not only equipped with all the physical comforts, but they were rich with mental and spiritual influences. And here in them, Allala and Lavina were made perfect beings, without their knowing. As speech comes to the little babies, so all arts, all knowledge, all yoga came to them.

A young girl once appeared to Allala in his cave as if in a dream. Allala opened his eyes and said: “Who are you, O goddess?”

“I am Saraswati, Manmahaji!” said she, “and I come and offer all learnings and arts to him who takes his seat on the humble slab on which you are sitting now. It is the Throne of the Beloved and I daily offer her my all a hundred times to him, in worship. Manmahaji! deign to accept my offerings. Here is all learning, the knowledge of all languages, all sciences and all arts at your feet.”

“But I don’t want all this, goddess Saraswati,” said Allala.

“That is why it is being laid at your feet, you may just look at them and my offerings will be distributed as blessed by you to the lesser being. You have only to look at them and they will be all at your command, like so many servants and maids in your attendance. You are the king, you have no need of them, they will await your pleasure,” said saraswati.

On another day, there stood before Allala’s half closed eyes, as he sat on the slab in *Padma-Asan* in the famous Buddha’s posture, a young man with a flute in hand. Allala softly looked up and said: “Who are you my friend? and what brings you here?”

“I am bidden to lay at your feet my this flute. It will emit *Anhad* music when touched by your lips”, said the young god.

“But my lips are engaged-Om Mani PADMANI OM, OM! OM!” said Allala.

“That is why sire, I am bidden to lay this flute at your holy feet! You need only look at it, it will be blessed by you and out of it many flutes will come and be distributed to many people.

“This poor flute cannot aspire to your lips by itself. Only when you would bless it by the touch of your hands, it would immediately attain that perfection which would raise it to your holy lips. And this poor flute too would attain to Buddhahood by your holy touch!” said the young god and saying this, disappeared.

One night when the jewel light was falling all over the head of Allala and then falling down on the floor of the cave, an old man, almost a skeleton with hardly any flesh left on his bones, only the skin, the arteries and veins and nerves and the red stream of blood in its deep scarlet colour was seen coursing through them, as if running in a transparent glass body! the very skeleton looked like a thin figure made of pure red light. His eyes seemed to look at the Past, Present and Future in one glance which it seemed, would kindle the very rocks and rivers With its fire, if it fell upon them.

Allala looked up and asked this Red Figure, “who are you and what brings you here?”

“I am bidden to offer you the Omniscient vision of a Yogi in which Time and Space revolve like a wheel and you can turn any period, past, present and future and see it in all its details, as it happened centuries ago, or it is happening now, or it would happen centuries hereafter, just as the ordinary man sees the panorama of his daily life before him”, said the red figure.

“But I do not need this vision and this second sight. I can not manage the affairs of the two simple eyes of mine,” said Allala.

“That is why sire! I am commanded to lay all my earnings at your feet, not that you need them. Sire! They are my love offerings to you. Just look at my offerings and I shall feel blessed! Then, these offerings can be distributed all over, in your name, as your grace. And these slaves of yours, my powers will be standing and waiting your commands whenever their fortune favours them to be called to run your behests,” said the red figure and disappeared.

One night, a concourse of beautiful women came and stood before Allala, in amorous postures some smiling, some posing by curling their whole bodies in most artistically in the form of lotus stalks that seemed to carry on them a number of half-opened blossoms of the maidenly bosoms, others turning, just a little a side their well braided, flower bedecked heads on their crany necks and looking at their heels and still others in a similar posture bending low, to arrange with their left hands the folds of their flowing gowns of their heels raised up in air, exposing thus their red-dyed feet. A few stood in artfully loosened garments, with their bodies semi-open, exposing portions of their full rounded snowy breasts, though in general they gave impression of being too careless as to their dress and toilet. And others stood staring at Allala, for their large eyes were full of tears and their hearts arrow-pierced. It seemed the latter were the quivers of Kamdeva who took his flower-tipped arrows by plucking each out of their hearts, thereby bleeding them and shooting the blood stained arrows at those before whom these damsels stood in their still innocence and in their utter helplessness. Kamdeva knows, as if it were, that the stain of the blood of the maiden is the hidden charm of his melodious, amorous game. Allala opened his eyes and saw a hundred nymphs filling the cave and giving it a look of the pleasure hall of a palace of some king, “Who are you here and what is your purpose here,” asked Allala.

A twitter like that of birds went ringing through the cave, for they all smiled together and their smiles and the soft sound which is heard as the flowers smile on their stems, touched by the solar ray early at day-break, filled the cave.

“We are the dancers of the middle-Regions and we are bidden to offer our gifts of the art of dancing to him who is enthroned here. And we have come to lay at your feet our art of amour and Dance, and of our skill of creating living human beings warm with the blood of our dance-rhythm, out of moonbeams as the painters do out of mere lines by learning our magic, one could, on a moonlit night, create a thousand fairy dancers by catching the lines of moon-beams and bending them and curving them into a million shapes in the rhythmical spatial whirl of our dancing limbs. The painters make only dead material portraits, ours is a real creation and the human figures thus made by the spell of our ever moving limbs are beings in their turn, like us and we fill spaces and times with a million dancers like ourselves *ad infinitum*,” said they.

“But I have no leisure from the rhythm of my own heart and the creation of my own mind. I need learn no more,” said Allala.

“But that is why we have come to offer all our arts and all created idols of our art to you, and they will come to you from now as voice and wings come to birds. You don’t need them, we know, that is why, we lay our all and ourselves at your feet, sire! We ourselves are the creation of your great Renunciation. We are the dreams that adorn your presence. Just cast one look on us and we shall feel blessed for ages. Here lie at your feet a few humble flower offerings of ours, pray, deign to accept them and then we will shower our flower-offerings in the joy of your touch, blessed by it, our love-offerings would rain as your grace on the regions below and petal would fall into a painter’s hand and a stamen piece into the hand of a sculptor and a broken flower will be caught by a poet and a drop-like, un-opened Jassamine-bud, out of it by some fortunate musician and some windflown flowers would fall to the share of the great dancers and singers of the Nether regions,” saying this they vanished.

One noon, as he was sitting on the shores of Mansarovar, there appeared before him a light blue figure running out of the Mansarovar and came to him walking on the waters. Allala raised his eyebrow and looking at him straight asked! “Who are you? and what brings you here?”

“Sire! I am the soul of waters, I live in Mansarovar. I have come to lay myself as an offering at your feet. People of the earth thirst for me, but I thirst for you.”

“My thirsts are quenched forever,” said Allala.

“That is why sir! I have to give myself up to you as your bond slave. Touched by you, I would rain on the regions below filling the thirsty. I pray to be blessed by your glance.”

A pure white dazzling figure of a goddess with two pairs of arms, otherwise with well-moulded limbs and well-cut features, as if a blaze of fire had suddenly assumed human shape, approached one day in the cave and sat at his feet.

“Who are you?” said Allala.

“I am the goddess of fires. I have come to be cooled by thee. Touch me that my soul be cooled. One glance from thee is my salvation.”

“But I do not go cooling people, you better go to the glaciers,” said Allala.

“I do not seek the coolness of snows, they extinguish me. I do not wish to relinquish my flame nor blaze, nor my spring from below, but I wish to cool my inner soul,” saying this, she vanished.

On a moonlit night, Allala was sitting on a fresh fallen snow and in the distant horizon shone the diamond peak of kailash, Allala lost himself in the light as he got up, he was wearing the apparel made as if, of the whole moonlight, for as he moved, the whole sphere moved with him. Every step of his taken forward made the place behind quite dark, for the night was robbed of its Moon by Allala. As Allala entered the dark cave where Lavina lived, the cave shone with the glare of a noon, for outside was all dark, the light of Heaven having squeezed itself all in a small place.

“How good of you, my Allala! to enter my cave today and honour me with your kindness,” said Lavina and fell at his feet.

“My Lavina! Look! I am wearing moonlight tonight,” said Allala and went out.

Towards the dawn, as Allala lay resting on his bed of the warm rock of his cave, he saw a figure made of transparent ice standing before him. It looked like a statue cut out of one whole block of ice and the uncut portions of the mother-block were still the back-ground along which the statue stood. Allala had so many illusions of the kind, that the still posture of the ice statue made him wonder for a little while as to how in one night, some one came and carved it out of ice and left it there. But as he gazed at it fully, it began to move.

“Who are you?” said Allala.

“I am the soul of moons. Sire! and I have come to offer myself to you,” said he.

“But I have no need of thee, my friend! I am over-occupied with the study of my own body,” said Allala.

“This is why sir! I have come. I know you do not need me, but there are millions burning with the hell-fires of desire, I am the light that would go and cool them, only if you cast your benign look of peace blessing me. I need the touch of your grace and then as I would distribute to myself in the joy of your love,” said the soul of Moons and vanished.

At day-break the same day, a similar statue of gold stood before Allala in the cave and Allala again knitted his brow as to who was playing with him, but again he saw, it was not a statue as he thought. It moved and spoke with a man’s voice as he looked fixedly at it.

“Who are you?” said Allala.

“I am the soul of Suns, I have come to offer myself to you,” said the gold coloured man.

“But I don’t need thee, my friend! I am over occupied with the study of my own nights,” said Allala.

“That is why I have come. I know you don’t need me, but there are millions of beings shivering with the cold of ignorance, I am the light that would warm them and make the blood of knowledge run through their veins, only if you just look at me, I can distribute myself only as your grace,” said the gold coloured man and vanished.

It was one day towards the close of the fifth year, when Allala saw, for a while the whole cave full of familiar faces of the good men, the advanced Boddhisatvas that had gathered on the open Maidan of the Anardha on the day he met the king of Anardha and there was the king of Anardha seated as a statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, on a higher seat amidst them. And there stood Prakasina sparkling in her youthful splendour, lending her own beauty to her very clothes and gems she wore. The assembly sat shedding a lustre in the cave brighter than the jewel-light of the cave itself. As Allala advanced and wished to fall at the feet of the King, he saw, it was an illusion of memory, for the cave as empty as ever and he as standing near the rock-cut cup-spring of water for taking a usual palmfull of it.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE VEIL LIFTED

On the shores of Mansarovar, Allala thus lived the life of a Buddhist monk for full five years and for his sweetly sad aesthetic temperament, the scenery around suited him most. Towards the end of the fifth year of his residence, a peculiar sensation of loneliness began creeping on his mind, which would have been poisonous for a warm and affectionate nature like him, but for the nectar that the presence of Lavina poured into it and immediately neutralised the poison.

Gradually the charm of Nature began to wear away from the mind of Allala, as on the shores of Mansarovar, the music of the snow tramps previous to his arrival there, had, in these last days become but fitful. Beauty that he saw in the glaciers of the Himalayas when seated with Tistan in the Garden of Fairies, was then becoming less attractive. Huge masses of stone and snow and broad blue sheet of Mansarovar threatened, at times, like the grinning ghosts and he almost thought what a meaningless piling up of dead matter was at all.

But whenever such thought would crowd on him, suddenly would come Lavina all uncalled, as if she saw his state of mind and would come as many times as it would be necessary. And looking at her the music would again start in his ear and the Mansarovar scenery would begin to kindle again with a new beauty, yet unseen that would fascinate him. And this vision would continue in him for days and days, and the mountain peaks of kailash would dance before him in a thousand rhythms in their angelic drapery of cloud skirts and *Boris* and giving an emphasis to their rhythm by concealing their faces from him at times and then suddenly parting off the veils and bursting again on his view in still greater, gayer splendour. The peaks would remind him of the face of his Lavina and the Mansarovar of her transparent bosom and the composition of the whole scenery of Lavina herself, as if, it was she behind the veils and here was she too with him before the veils. Without her, to him, the natural scenery had gradually become meaningless. Though he had assumed the garb of a Buddhist monk, he gradually hungered more and more for her company which was so simple and charming. It was more familiar than all the vision he had in the cave.

Lavina, however, had ceased to have any rights on the Buddhist monk and she never thought of even laying her head on his knee for the past five long years. She lived in her separate appointed cave with her flock and came to serve the monk, like an old Buddhist devotee, with the cup of milk twice a day to him. Her own main food was a look at her Allala every day, and by god's favour, she got two glimpses of him every day, at Mansarovar and towards the close of the fifth year, a few more.

Allala was her Mansarovar she thought. Her body was much reduced and so was Allala's by the rigours of winters in spite of the comforts provided by the caves, that had already passed there, the last was just passing. Four summers had been all so glorious. The caves provided just enough for keeping the flesh and blood together, it was after all the period of discipleship through which both were passing.

On the other hand Allala without Lavina, in the latter days of the penance, was like a fish without water in all these waters of beauty. One day, as she came, with her daily cup of milk, Allala

was sitting on a rock getting out on towards the lake with his back to Mansarovar and waiting for Lavina's coming. "There she comes!" said he, as he was tuneless from the previous night.

As soon as Lavina came, the scenery around began to sing once again to him the tremulous music and the snowy peaks began to blaze again like gold, and he forgot to complain to her of his nightly and daily-solitude that was eating into the vitals of his souls. The complaints had come right up to his lips, but were washed off by the waves of music into nothingness. When Lavina turned her back and was at a little distance, he again remembered his complaints and called her out—"Lavina! please return." She hurriedly came back and said, "Yes, pray! Allala! what is your command."

"Lavina! I find solitude eating into the vitals of my soul. I am growing weak daily and starved and I glow up only when I see you in the morning and in the evening, otherwise my time bores me," said Allala.

"Allala! beloved! life is as you take it, as you make it. Why lonely, the whole beauty of the holiest place in the whole world is your company," said Lavina.

"But in the day it might be true, but not at night. It is all dark and nothing lists," said Allala.

"I think your cave is dark at night. I will get you tomorrow an oil lamp fed by the butter of the sheep and a wick and I think the novel little light of the lamp would regale you," said Lavina.

Saying this, she sat on a boulder opposite and closed her eyes. The cherubic music began its tremulous peals, joy came in a storm and the whole night passed off on two boulders on the lake Mansarovar in Nirvanic ecstasy, without their knowing where they were, till the Eastern sky was bathed in crimson and Allala opened his eyes and saw the night had gone as short as a wink and Lavina sat there on the boulder, motionless!! The perfumes of heaven flew around her and the *Hansas* of Mansarovar were sitting in her lap, warmed by her love.

Allala gazed with dumb astonishment at the living statue of the Great **“OM” MANI! PADMANI OM,”** and here he saw in her the verification of all the statements and contradictions thereof, contained in the scriptures.

“Lavina! you have become Buddha,” said Allala.

“Pardon! Pardon!! Beloved!!! It is your love that has made me so peaceful. You are my Buddha,” said Lavina.

Allala felt a little ashamed at this remark but he was so full of the spell the whole night’s reverie had cast on him, as he did not much mind it.

“How great is this place! How beautiful the kailash peak: See, at this time, it looks exactly like you, Lavina! How divine!” said Allala.

“Quite true, Allala! It is the blessings of these great white saints, the peaks of Kailas that one feels so peaceful here,” said Lavina.

So she stood gazing at him for a minute and then ran off to get milk for him.

The sheep and Ansi were restless in the cave in which they were shut up for the whole night, not so much on account of the restraint put on them, as on account of her absence.

As she approached her cave, the plaintive yelps of the dog and the bleating of the sheep came mingling as one long cry for their mistress from within. She ran in and embraced every one, called out one by one by name and told them that it was her Allala who delayed her there on the Mansarovar for the whole night.

Soon she got the milk ready and hastened to where she had left Allala. By that time Allala had gone. She called him by name: no reply. She called at his cave: no reply. She went in, it was vacant. She looked all around by shading her eyes with her hand and Allala was nowhere to be seen. She felt for a moment like a fish without water and was dying instantaneously as her heart almost refused to beat any more, but she heard a voice within: “Daughter! be calm, compose yourself. Allala has gone running enraptured by the beauty of the marvellous scene of the sun-rise on this lake with his hands akimbo to a little away, hidden from your view. He is maddened by joy. You wait for him here for he is coming soon. There is his protector, he is safe. Don’t be anxious.”

Lavina went into a trance and sat there with the cup of milk before her thinking of Allala deeply. Allala was mad with joy and going on and on, and as he in his mad joy began running to the engoldened sheet of water of Mansarovar, he suddenly felt someone pulling him back: “Manmahajil! be calm, compose yourself. This is the climax of your five years’ stay on Mansarovar, you have undergone the trial, the Elders are pleased with your reserve, your ecstasy and your vow. Don’t go further! Go back fully composed, Lavina is waiting for you with your cup of milk. She is your guardian angel, a second more of this excess of yours and she would have left her body. Go back.” And as Allala looked back by turning his head, on one side, there stood in a faint outline of purple Holy Mists of Nimbus a majestic white haired old man, the very one it appeared to him, who sits behind the veil of the glaciers and who hidden behind the scenery of the glaciers was fascinating his



eye so long. He has come. He is before him; His Master. He recognised him as a baby recognises his mother. It was a flash, a voice!!

“There is He! The veils are lifted,” thought Allala, speechless with wonder. As he thought this, the cunch shells sounded in his ear, the bells rang, the showers of flowers fell from high and Allala fell at His feet, speechless, vanquished, but he had won his resolve of seeing what is behind the snows of the Himalayas.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ALBITA

Allala returned as was Lavina already assured of it, a much stabler man than what he was as he went, dazed by an extraordinary vision of beauty that he had. As it was, a second more and he would have fallen into the lake of Mansarovar, maddened by the exquisite dance of the morning light on its waves. There sat still Lavina with her cup of milk. Allala came and took her in his embrace saying: "I have been very severe like the Mansarovar winter to you. This monk has been bad. Come: you had no rest, no sleep for the last five years. My Lavina, come! lie in my arms today, as you laid once on the moonlit snows on the parting of ways. Do you remember Lavina! Lavina!!" Lavina ran into his embrace and like a sheep began rubbing her hairy head against Allala's bosom and cowering in his arms like a little child of five, like a baby.

The great Lavina fell into deep repose after full five years of continuous waiting for this moment. Glorious was the scene before and the skies were a flag with a thousand strings of flowers and Allala saw over his head a canopy of gold like an umbrella. Blessings rained on him as the God's child Lavina slept in his arms on the shores of Mansarovar! The day passed, the night too and Lavina was still asleep. But the music flowed in continuous stream through the being of Allala and it looked, as if, her sleep was all too brief, for she opened her eyes exactly in the same hour next day and said: "My Allala: have I slept very long?"

"No", said Allala opening his eyes full and seeing the time, "not more than about half an hour, dear Lavina!"

"Ah! but you have eaten nothing since last night. You are staring yourself to a skeleton. You do not take any pity for your Lavina. Come and drink this cup now, my Allala," said Lavina. As she lifted the cup, the water was separate and the milk separate. "Ah!" she said "these Hansas<sup>1</sup> of Mansarovar have conspired against me to tell you that my love for you has only this little white piece of real love and the rest is all water. Let me go and see if the sheep can give a little more for this morning," said Lavina and ran to her cave for more milk.

As she approached her cave, Ansi and the sheep were sending out a plaintive cry as she had heard some time ago. She got very angry that these little folks have been growing jealous of her visits to Allala. Angry she rushed in and rebuked them all, gave a gentle slap to Ansi and spoke not a word with her sheep, showing she did not like their behaviour. The poor creatures began crouching at her feet, shrinking within themselves, as if, they were sorry for disturbing her.

But when she touched the udders of the sheep, she saw that there was the milk of full twenty four hours in them and she had full twenty four hours of sleep and neither the Hansas had done anything, nor were her dumb animals at fault. She embraced them very apologetically and expressed her regrets for having lost her temper and gave them each a loving caress.

Filling a full pitcher of milk, off she went where Allala sat waiting for her.

"My Allala! how cruel of me to have kept you in this hard posture for full twenty four hours. It is not the same day, though it has deceived even your experienced eye by appearing to be

exactly like yesterday. All days are like the old Pamirans, you cannot distinguish one from the other. Is it not? But it grieves me to have kept you starved for so long,” and saying this, she offered the milk with her usual smile which always had the rare streak of omniscience in it.

“No, Lavina! you are always fatal in your kindness and its apologies,” said Allala.

Lavina feasted her Buddha thus on the shores of Mansarovar and with whatever was left she feasted the Hansas.

“We must start today for Poali Kanta,” said Allala.

“Is five years over?” said Lavina a bit confused, “It seems, we came here only yesterday.” Saying this, Lavina went to collect together her belongings and Allala went in to his cave to prepare for his departure. By about mid-day, both saluted the Mansarovar lake, kissing the sacred ground with their lips and rubbing on their forehead the wet clay and bade a deep affectionate farewell to the Holy Saints and Sages that all lived there in *cognito*.

They went after five years, retracing their steps on the same path by which they had come. As the night fell, they halted and encamped once again under the starry canopy of the Heaven, on the snows of the Himalayas.

Lavina, after doing all the little things for the comfort of the sheep which had to be unburdened of their load of grain, grass and furs and blankets that the great Tistan had given them, came and sat by Allala.

Soon she laid her head on his knee and took a deep breath of relief.

“Lavina!” said Allala.

“Yes, my Prince of Peace!” said Lavina.

“I don’t see much difference between your Allala of five years back and your present Allala, I feel being the same and yet I have passed five years of calm and serene and right contemplation on the holiest of spots, whose very touch, it is said, makes a man a god, without having gained anything much,” said Allala.

“How can you see yourself my Prince of Peace!” said Lavina, “you are Buddha, that is soon to be crowned and you are the king of men. You are the holiest temple on the face of the earth. You do not know. By touching your knee, by swallowing the joy of a few looks at you, by having sat at your feet, I tell you, my flesh is purity itself. When I touch my flesh, I feel it is House of God. Don’t you see, how I, a best, clutched at you so often, how I bit your clothes, your hands and your feet, how I made your bosom hot with my physical passion and now how even my touch is so soothing! It is due to your contact, O Prince of Peace! Your touch is al-chemical, it inspires life, love and faith! You are great love!” said Lavina.

“But Lavina! this is your own good worship pure and simple. I know how great you are. I know, without you, Mansarovar would have been my death. Scenery would have killed me. Solitude

would have eaten my soul. See! I came searching after my mother and I have not seen her,” said Allala.

“Not seen her! Ever since we left my old father’s camp, from the very first night, she has been with us. We have not been two, but three. She was always guiding us, her children. The music you heard whenever I saw you, was her speech and her blessing for you. The reveries that kept me spell-bound for hours and you used to say. I looked like a statue of Sakya, it was the inspiration of the actual bodily presence of mother in me, as material as you and I, as spiritual as you and I. Allala! it was your mother, the Great Albita! There is she coming! Look up! The Heavens have divided into two, near that Great Bear up towards the Pole star and there she is coming! Look Allala, in that direction. Ah there!” said Lavina who was very strangely transfigured.

“Yes! that is my mother!” said Allala.

By this time, she came and embraced both of them. Every nerve of Allala rang like a fiddle string and from every part of his body came the song, *Albita, Albita*.

“My son! your mother is glad you have done five years’ contemplation on the shores of Mansarovar. I bless thee my child!” said Albita.

“But mother: how misleading are the directions given in books. Where would I have been without Lavina and Lavina without you and both of us without your constant watch on us,” said Allala, and “it was not solitude, it was the richest, loveliest, kingliest society at Mansarovar.”

“Quite right: it is the Mercy of the Great Ones, some are guided, some are led astray and all are being led as the Great Ones wish,” said Albita.

Albita put her hand on the forehead of Allala and said! “My child! Look up!” The Heavens burst upon his view, not in that usual miserable look of the vast blue and tiny stars only, but they were filled with the galaxy of Beings of Light and Fire and they were showering stars, as mere tiny flowers in a luminous rain of light on the spot where these three sat. And as the dazzled eyes of Lavina and Allala closed and opened again, there were only two, all alone by themselves sitting under the stars.

Lavina got up and went about milking the sheep. She brought a cup for Allala and begged him on her knees to drink and he could not resist her.

Next day, though Allala had just a little rest, Lavina without any, was ready for the daily journey, her sheep full-laden. It seemed she never slept, she needed no sleep. She never drank any milk out of the cup; whenever she needed, she put her lips to the udders and drank her fill, as the sheep loved to give her milk that way and she did not like to change her old girlish habit and give offence to the feelings of the dumb creatures. Possibly when she drank milk, she had a little nap also, covered by the woolly bodies of her sheep sheltering her. This was a little bit of her private life of which Allala had no knowledge, it was between her sheep and herself.

“Lavina! you are a being of Pure Fire! You need almost nothing to live. An occasional rest, an occasional meal, you make enough for you. I am now resolving that I would milk your sheep and offer you every mom and eve a cup of milk as you do,” said Allala.

“But my Prince of Peace! this is my work. Yours is to cure the misery of the miserable ones. You have to make green the heart of all that are scorched with sorrow and suffering, disease and pain, filth and mire. O Great Deliverer! you need no cup of milk or water, it is your great compassion that you deign to accept this poor woman’s service. It is your mercy. Mercy! Mercy!! Mercy!!!” saying this she fell on the feet of Allala who was by this time standing erect for the day’s journey.

Allala quickly lifted Lavina up and strained her full in his embrace.

**Footnotes:**

1. Hansas of Mansarovar are famous in Sanskrit literature for their power of discrimination i.e. of separating milk from water.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### ANSI

Allala and Lavina with the flock were just nearing the crossing from where the road parted towards the old Monastery of Poali Kanta, when they had to stop due to the plaintive yelp of Ansi. Ansi was very old now and it was feared he might be too tired to go further. So on a green sward, near the crossing, just above a steep ascent from down a deep valley, both stopped short and began enquiring from Ansi if there was anything wrong. Before anything could be done, the poor dog died at the feet of Lavina, evidently of heart failure. Lavina took up the dog in her lap and tried all kinds of the usual massages she used to give these animals to relieve them of all pains of which they could neither give symptoms, nor point the exact spot and Lavina had grown by her long contact with them, omniscient of their needs. But Ansi which lay in her lap then was dead. As soon as she saw this, she became very sorrowful and serene, the usual hilarity and buoyancy left her and she sank deep into thought by the side of Ansi, forgetting even Allala who was also standing by her side in deep sympathy.

“Lavina! Ansi is dead, your Ansi is gone,” said Allala after some time, very softly and with great tenderness.

“Sire, yes! I had suddenly sunk into a prayer for him. May Albita grant him a place in Heaven!” said Lavina.

“He was a very faithful devotee. He did his work most honourably. And I feel the pain of parting from him,” said Allala.

“Master! you need not be sad about it. It is only a departure, just as I came away from my old father following you. Death of such beings is due to the passionate impulse, a thing similar to what drove me from my parents, but in spite of all ‘Knowings, I feel sad my Allala! you give me comfort,” said Lavina.

Allala immediately sat down and took Lavina in his embrace, caressing her tresses with his hand. By the touch of Allala’s body. a thrill went up galvanising her heart, almost like magnetic shock which travelled upwards towards the head; her ears and temple region began burning and her whole head got full of that intoxication which had come upon her the first evening on their way upward, when she had first put her head on his knee. She could no more keep her eyes open and joy-choked was her whole being with its sweet inebriation. She now and then, just clutched at the hem of Allala’s garment and once or twice bit his hand and then she slept. The whole night passed off, Allala sitting motionless like a statue lest her repose should be disturbed. When the sun came and woke her by pricking her lovely red cheeks with his golden rays, that she woke and with a childlike look saw her Allala sitting still like a statue and lisped in a babylike accent, “Allala! my Allala!”

“Yes, Lavina! my divine Lavina!” said Allala.

The dog was duly buried, Allala having dug his grave and Lavina having lowered him into it with her own hands. Allala brought a huge stone and covered it all and said “Here lies a faithful being that loved his mistress and in his mistress his God.”

The sheep had not touched grass, nor water, nor grain nor salt and were unwilling to move from where Ansi lay, but Lavina whispered something in the ears of each sheep and on they went with slow sorrowful steps.

“Allala! I wonder what you carry always on your back, as if it is your enlarged shoulder bone,” said Lavina.

“My dear Lavina! but for this, you would never have seen your Allala.”

“But if I am not inquisitive and if I am not transgressing into any sacred secrets, may I know what it is?” said Lavina.

“Well! it would be quite simple to you now. It is the bundle my mother left with the old man of Gangola to be given to me, when I grow of eighteen years of age. I am now twenty-five and I have carried it on my back as a sacred, holy relic for two years of my wanderings in the plains to Gaya and other Buddhistic holy places and five years at Mansarovar and I think, I have to carry it for another five years, before the contents are known,” said Allala.

“Allala! if you allow me, it has been paining me all these years to see you carrying it. So I have not only been carrying mentally this load for you, but its pain as well. So by putting it on your back, you have been causing me, without your knowing, mental pain. I pray to you to give it to me to carry. I would never open it and see its contents, I promise that solemnly,” said Lavina.

“It is a trifle, O angel! why are you today concerned about it for nothing. It is now a habit with me and it is part of my body. Just as I feel no weight of my body, so I do not feel it. You need not worry. Be quite relieved about it,” said Allala.

“But I wish to carry it for you,” said Lavina. Allala became quite serious, again in that severe cast of face which he kept towards her at Mansarovar for the last five years and seeing his face change, Lavina kept quite and began walking at a little distance behind.

“Ah! I have offended him, but so had mother told me that, on this point he would be cross with me,” ruminated Lavina.

The rest of the day passed in stem silence and the song in the blood of Allala also became fainter and fainter, till it was about to die. He felt restless and could not explain the extraordinary behaviour of Lavina who was generally so docile and cherub-like. But the thought that after all she is a woman and she had been feeling this load on me and how sore indeed must she have felt all along about it. But he went on. He did not like to reveal to her that by this little trifle, he was badly disturbed. It would be all right, he thought.

Lavina came behind talking to her sheep and putting more speed into their hooves as unconsciously Allala had quickened his steps much too fast both for her and for her sheep.

At last towards the evening, a beautiful open space came where Allala halted for the night camp and as he looked backward, he saw Lavina and her sheep still on the opposite side of the ravine which he had crossed and gained to an open sward on his side. He saw that in his serious mood, he had left her behind. After some-time, the brave daughter of the shepherd joined him, she was as hilarious and buoyant and gay as ever.

“My Allala! if you quicken your pace like that, you will break your covenant with me, without your knowing. You had promised not to desert me and it amounted almost to desertion today. Pardon me, if I was wrong but leave me not and go not away from me, forgive me, speak to me kindly, be compassionate, my Prince,” said Lavina.

“My Lavina! how can I go anywhere without you, the very song ebbs out of my blood and I feel but the empty clinking of nothing in me. You are blessing of gods to me. Without your pure company, these hills would devour me, so dreadful they look”. Lavina came rushing like a girl to him and fell on her knees before him—”Forgive me,” said she.

Allala drew her to himself and there they sat together watching again the stars and particularly that group which, like sacred seals, had opened and a doorway had flung wide for the Illustrious Albita to pass out of Heaven to Earth, the other night on the snows!!

“Look, my Allala! today the celestials assemble in different direction of the sky. There look at the belt of the Orion opening there, there, the door flings open and there is Mother in her dazzling effulgence! Today she is wearing the sky-coloured garments and you can only see her when she moves a little as if she is talking to someone there.”

It took no time and there Albita, the mother, was sitting by her children on the spot about 30 miles this side of Poali Kanta on the circuitous, narrow way faintly indicated by star growth of a particular species of the wild rose which marked the way only for the Initiates to the sacred place.

Albita embraced both of them and it seemed she had two bodies, for Allala saw her embracing Lavina and Lavina saw her embracing Allala at one and the same time! They had seen so many of these wonderful things all this time that their minds were just impressed by it as if by a flash of lightning and then both of them were soon absorbed in receiving her blessings.

“So you had a little quarrel today, my son! with your faithful Lavina. The relics are only tokens of Nam, they are not Nam. So now you give that load to her. There is a little necklace of five rubies, the one that I, in my last incarnation made for myself. And Lavina; you should keep that necklace for Prakasina. Remember that is the name to whom it belongs. And the rosary is for you, Allala! and the robe is for you dear Lavina! to wear. You should keep it till the time comes for you to wear it,” said Albita.

“Nothing! how strange! Prakasina told me all this before I left Anardha. In a discussion with me, she got into a psychic fervour and told me everything,” said Allala.

“My son! Even your Lavina knew all the contents, otherwise do you think her quarrel over it would have ended so cheerfully! And how would it have been possible for her to bear her pain of it all with that heroic endurance that she has shown,” said Albita smilingly.



“My son! your five years here are to pass under the direct instruction of the Great One whom you had the good fortune of meeting at Mansarovar on the last day. He is your Teacher and he is my Teacher. There is a joy in your soul of the Great Arahaat, you should not cast the dark shades of any severity of self-discipline over yourself. You have seen how it darkens your soul. Know from now that you are the Emancipated Being and no prisons of thought you shall make for yourself.

“One thing more! you have been worrying yourself about as to how I brought you to Anardha. You will know that later, but you should have no doubt about it in your mind. Love in Heavens is not under any shadows of Maya. In my last incarnation which I gave up at Gangola, I was born in the village-Kamidarah in Kafirstan and I had assumed a form which you see here,” said she and lifted her palm. A veil lifted, Albita was transformed into a form that dazzled the eyes of Allala and Lavina. It was the perfection of the prettiness of beauty in that little compass, with all its gracefulness gathered there and both of them were being irresistibly attracted into that all-attracting shape and they found their very souls were melting off into it, Allala actually went and embraced the figure passionately and swooned away there on its bosom, as Lavina had many a time swooned in his own embrace!

“This is the form of your mother,” continued Albita! “and even when I was a young girl, I used to see in my dreams the young beautiful king Jasmanji of Anardha and hear his name repeated into my ear, just as you feel a song in your blood in the presence of Lavina who is so blessed. Similarly I used to feel the song in my blood, whenever I named him and I used to utter his name involuntarily, without my knowing, unconsciously or, say, sub-consciously. I felt a strong desire for him, love sprang in me for him, as it did spring in Lavina for you. As soon as I was eighteen, I stole out of my home and I was led exactly as you have been led to the shores of Mansarovar on to the cave where you have been living. I reached there via Ladakh route. You are a man and I was a girl. You had Lavina with you, I had none. And wherever I passed, everything ran attracted to me, my beauty was fatal for me, as in the world of babies, beauty is to them but fire which they run to catch in their hands. But just as you had protection in one way, I had in another. Thus I lived in these regions and last of all in Poali Kanta monastery, in all for seven years, after which I went straight to the kingdom of Anardha. Just as Lavina always thinks to you, I never ceased thinking of Jasmanji, but I never met him. It was not destined that I should meet him, you will know this later.

“As to my marriage, there is no definite institution of this kind in Heaven. All moments of two musical notes blending into each other are moments of marriage here. And so are the moments of marriage for advanced souls in body. You have had innumerable marriages with Lavina and she with you during the last five years. These moments of fusion of two souls into each other are marriages. Only the people on earth, as I have just said, like the babies playing with fire, bum their fingers over it. Just as you have prolonged one intense moment of Lavina’s love to these five years, so we prolong it to eternity. The people of the earth would be freed from all sorrow and suffering, if they just learn to make this one moment as long as life itself.

“Your father is an Adept like you, he is an Arahaat and you came out of that splendid Assembly, the Beings of fire I showed you. Here, see again!” And saying this, she lifted her palm again, and the Heavens were full of the great Beings of Light. The tallest among them is your father, he is my companion, just as you are to Lavina! continued she. We do not call here such people by any names you are accustomed to hear in your ethics, as husband, brother or son or even companion. We have no names, but Nam, I do not call him even now my husband, nor did I call

him then, just as Lavina and you do not know what you are to each other, so we were and so we are. I saw you coming from Heaven one day and I took you in my lap. Leaving Poali Kanta, I was thought-carried on to the borders of Anardha. You will learn all this later. But I command you to get out of the cocoon of darkness you have secretly been weaving around yourself since long. Here I tear it. There is no other way for you to get out of it. Come out of it and see now," saying this she put her hands on his forehead, and Allala saw that the whole Himalayas were burning with that innumerable Beauty that he just saw burning in the Heavens, as if they all had come close to him and stood with him like his own mother. They were filling the Himalaya, every inch of ground was covered with God in infinite colour and form. Only Albita had vanished.

Whatever Allala saw Lavina too saw, and she bore witness to him and all this passed off like a flash of lightning and their daled eyes opened again on a jet-black night scene that had thickened by that time into a shapeless mass. The only relief for these two great-ones was the twinkling of stars above!

## CHAPTER XXV

### POALI KANTA

About 10,000 ft. above the sea level, there is still a pretty spot, perhaps the prettiest in that part of the Himalayas called Poali Kanta. It has silver fountains in its premises and rivulets dashing from the higher hill rush past it, filling it with the mystic chant of their song unceasing.

On the green velvet carpet that covered the whole ground, the various flower designs were traced by Nature's hands. If Mansarovar was grand and sublime, Poali kanta was pretty and picturesque. It was a great relief to the minds of Allala and Lavina to be brought to this neat, snug little place for a sojourn of another five years.

"Who is Prakasina?" began one day the lovely Lavina.

"Prakasina is a whole Heaven of Love and beauty, a dream of God similar in its fascination to what you saw at the green sward that night, when mother said: "See here, this is the form I wore in my last incarnation." Mother, it seems quitted her bodily vesture and gave it to the soul of Prakasina. It seems, that is the last composition of what they call attractiveness in a woman. It is not in any distinctiveness of any simple feature or form, it is the irresistible attraction of the whole composition and its total charm. It is the totality of Beauty in a snubbing presence. It is something, indefinable. No one can escape from the majestic attraction of such a one, just as you saw that you and I never wished that night to come out of its charm. We wished a complete Nirvana into it. Prakasina is Nirvana in flesh. She is the Princess of Anardha, the born Adept afresh Arahaat.

"Prakasina then is a *Darshanam*," said Lavina.

"I hope you will take me with you, my Prince, to Anardha, where such beautiful people live", said Lavina.

"Lavina! we both will be going together," replied Allala.

Allala underwent a complete transformation here at Poali Kanta. He was quite a changed man. He reminded one once again of the young lad Manmahaji as he lived in the village of Gangola in company with Mahina, a boisterous buoyant, humorous, cheerful boy recking nothing, fearing nothing and vexing everybody with the abundance of his uncontainable life-energy.

In Poali Kanta, he was assuming the manners of a new Crishna, as at Mansarovar, he was more or less in the serene mood of an old Christ, say.

The fairies from the Garden of Fairies would come and dance with him and the songsters of Heaven would play on their flutes at a nod from his brow, the sweet strains would float in air that would madden all creation by their melody. Such was his presence, his personality.

Allala was every day and every night becoming something new. He was changing rapidly and he donned a hundred colours of joy every day. At his call, every creeper would spring forth for his pleasure like a young nymph of Heaven and the world, that till now, was naught but mere rock

and tree and flower and stream and sky, or, at best, the so called metaphors of life, became a world of joyous crowds of gods in whose company, both Lavina and Allala lived in Great region of ecstasy. But one little thing of the life of Lavina and Allala was most marked here at Poali Kanta that, the day Allala was in any way unkind or severe to Lavina, there was nothing but the jet black Himalayan night for Allala and he almost wept with despair saying: "O God! this innocent looking Lavina is, after all, the secret of my life and how I came by her."

Lavina was always at the beck and call of Allala in one uniform spirit of baby-like love; she never complained on her part or did anything to offend him, only some knot in his own mind would sometime, unaccountably creep in from elsewhere and spoil the day. And this happened only or about half a dozen times in their whole sojourn of five years at Poali Kanta.

For five years, every night there was a dance of the angelic maidens of matchless beauty on the broad green swards of Poali Kanta and every day a Fair of the celestials to worship Allala and his disciple, Lavina. There was no summer, winter, no time, no space, it was one continuous ring and round of song, dance, love and its merriment. Peace of life was burning in million colours! But all this was behind the veil which had lifted only for the Blessed Two. Lavina alone saw the celestial assemblies of angels keeping company with Allala. While seen from outside, to all the pilgrims that came there, it was an extraordinary monk living in a dug-out near the old monastery and a shepherd girl in the another dug-out with her sheep, who took every day the humble offerings of a cup of milk to the Buddhist God of Poali Kanta and the monk accepted this offering in Buddha's name. And they carried a story with them from here that two adepts lived at Poali Kanta who sometimes gave their Darshanam and at others, became invisible at will. No search would find them, but they would, when fortune favours man, appear suddenly, as if, out of nothing and bless the vision of the pilgrims. The story credited both Lavina and Allala with powers of becoming visible and invisible at their sweet will. Their very smiles, it was reported abroad, conferred occult powers and many, it was said, returned from there enriched with gifts from these two Boddhisatvas living at Poali Kanta!

Here did Lavina and her Allala became acquainted with the cosmic processes going on behind the veil where minds are made, where destinies are cast, where Titans chisel the forms of beauty and they saw how souls are built up, with infinite labour by the every watchful gods.

The flower carpeted floor of the green swards of Poali Kanta vibrated with soft music when Allala came out of his cave and touched them with his bare feet. It seemed, when Allala came, there danced on that floor a myriad nymphs of Heaven and a myriad flutes sounded in air!

On moonlit night, wherever Allala cast his looks, the moon beams began dancing and whirling with joy and this joy created a million forms of beauty that filled all the empty expanses. The hills around danced in the looks of Allala and the trees in his joy. The flowers like little children lifted their arms to be lifted up by him and they reminded him again of the T'istan's little kiddies. What to others looked inhabitable places, to Allala and Lavina, were pleasure gardens, in which they had the invisible singing society of the angels of God.

Lavina would watch Allala dancing whole nights with a host of maidens whose bodies were traced out by the Creator in air, as if by putting little dots of the twinkling stars into lines and then bending and moulding them into human figures.

“My Lavina!” would say Allala, “I am tired of my own creativeness. My looks fill the infinite space, as if it were, with the self-created finites and crowd me out.”

“My Allala! it is thy *Lila!* when thou closest thy eyes, nothing is, when thou openest, the million worlds are born that very instant,” would say Lavina.

Allala was the child of God and the whole nature his living nurse. The terrible aspect of her, the Leonine figure ‘red in tooth and claw’ now seemed to Allala only a funny masquerade and to him, she was as affectionate as his own mother Albita. Even Allala’s whims had become to her the most urgent concerns and her hidden resources were ready to move at the little nods from the brow of Allala.

The touch of his feet turned dust into gold, creepers into most beautiful women and his voice got answers from the very rocks who rose in human forms with folded hands and worshiped him!

Allala had again become a babe whom God lifted on His shoulders and carried him about, as once Allala carried the children of Tistan.

What was known as deep solitudes of Poali Kanta, was the sweetest Home for him, snug and warm in winter, cool and cosy in summer and he was kept much too over engaged; and it was as short as a wink of his eye, that his appointed sojourn of five years came to a close.

Lavina was observing from day to day her Allala blossoming in the full glory of his manhood. The extraordinary reserve of the Buddhist Monk, he had already dropped and was open and frank and natural like a child, wise like a god, and playful like a nice naughty good boy of about fifteen. He would go down to the hill villages and collect the little children and young girls around him, help them in their labours of sowing and harvesting the hill crops and live with them for days and days. Lavina would wait for him alone for days and days, knowing that the boy got immersed in his games!

The snows had just melted off, after a severe winter of six months and the green grass came like a miracle sprouting from below and in about a fortnight, Poali Kanta swards wore an altogether new and voluptuous appearance, due to the chokingly luxuriant growth of violets, wild Jasmine white and yellow, strawberries, crimson roseberries, geranium and iris. And down in the valley, in wild plenty came up yellow, blue, crimson and purple flowers, all mingling their faces in a way as to fill all space with smiles.

One day, in the warm sunshine as they were sitting, both Allala and Lavina and the sheep too were basking in the sunshine a little further away, there came a voice ‘My children’ from behind and as they looked back, there stood the Mother!

They got up saying: “Mother! Mother!”

“The day has come” said she, “when Lavina should put on the Robe I left for her on earth and you should take your rosary that I left for you and both of you go from here to the kingdom of Anardha. This rosary is the Grace of the Lord for you which descends today on you crowning all your efforts my son and is symbolic of the Higher Ones bestowing on you all the powers that come

to an Arahaat as hands and feet come to an ordinary man. These powers are nothing to be proud of, just as no serious man thinks much about a new suit of clothes. They are just accomplishments of man, the beautiful man of love and faith.

“And the robe will bestow on you O daughter Lavina! all what I had in me during my last incarnation. It is one of my *me's* that is given you to-day. I would, henceforth, live in you. And this necklace of rubies to be put with her permission, O son! round the neck of Prakasina with your own hands. It is her prize.

“And my children! know, love is the greatest Reality on earth and in Heaven. It is the one and the same every where. The dog Ansi and your sheep have it exactly what blazes in the high Heaven.

“Be simple like babies in the feeling of love and live naming Him, let the song bum red in your blood with its infinite music unbroken. All else is of no consequences. Count those blissful moments of life, in which you have been shown so many times now and in which how you melt into each other without leaving a trace behind of separation of any sort.

“My children! do not go away with the thought that the material world is invain or base, or vile. Look!” and here she put her hands on the foreheads of Allala and Lavina and they both saw that every particle of matter had in it the whole of Heavenly glory, and every particle was alive with God's Breath.

“Seeing this be speechless, my children! Be as simple as babes. You know the Truth. It is both behind the veil and before the veil shining in equal splendour,” continued Albita; “My children! wherever you go, carry with you the fragrance of love and the Song of *Nam*. You have become the meanings of your own scriptures.”

As they looked up to see her, Albita had vanished.

Next morning, as they prepared to go down, the hills around Poali Kanta monastery and all the terraces of the mystic place were full of Shining Figures, hundreds of Boddhisatvas, Adepts who had assembled there at that moment of their departure, to name the new completed man—Manmahaji—and it seemed the valleys shouted his Name! Manmahaji! Manmahaji! Rejoice! A new man has risen! Rejoice!

As they went a little distance, a voice came from behind: “Beloved! I am with you always” and just turning his head on one side, Manmahaji saw the Great One whom he had met at Mansarovar in the same faint almost invisible purple outline of Holy Mists. He turned back with full haste to fall at His Feet but the figure had disappeared!! And as again looked ahead, Manmahaji saw Him entering into his body.

“I live here in you and all that you have seen is your own self” came the voice from within.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE TRAVELLED TRACKS

The first camp of Allala and Lavina, the two full-bloomed poets divine, after leaving Poali Kanta was on the crossing near the grave of Ansi and they remembered him in very dear terms, they stopped there and planted a few violets on Ansi's grave.

Lavina felt deep in sad love of her Ansi. Finding her a bit sorrowful Allala touched her softly on the shoulder and simply said "Lavina!" "Yes! My prince of Peace! I am on the grave of dear Ansi," replied she.

The very next day, they were exactly on the spot where Hang Chang had met Tistan and both the poets encamped there for the night. Early in the morning, before starting on their downward journey, Allala was seated on the new flower carpet spread by the mother for him and, with the eagerness of a baby for his mother, was waiting for the coming of the Sun once again where he had the first glimpse of the glaciers with Tistan. The Sun rose from within the folds of the drapery of the beauty of the ancient white veils of the Himalayan glaciers and the seer was lost in the scene! The scene melted off into him and he into the scene. Hours passed and yet it was but one great moment of union, the moment of fusion into each other. Attraction is according to the mass. Those who have ever felt pulled towards an angelic woman and have felt this physical pull for their whole life pulling them continuously towards her and have seen it for ever increasing, might well imagine the attraction between Allala and the Beauty of the Glaciers that ended in this intense maddening moment of interfusion of the two.

There also sat dumb with wonder, with her lips parted, her eyes open, devouring the vision of a thousand spiritual Beings before her, the great Lavina.

Only as usual, the sheep were ready to take the road and not finding their mistress, came searching for her in the quiet place where they both sat and began grazing on the green turf a little below without disturbing them, trying with their little mouths to avoid flowers, as some one with his hand throws the scum on the surface of an old water on asides and wants to drink the clear water from below. But they did not succeed and the mouths full of flowers mixed with the morsels of grass they had to devour, so great was the hospitality shown by the "Garden of fairies" to the sheep of Lavina.

The grazing animals drew the attention of Allala and Lavina to the road-taking and they rose saluting the great Glaciers.

"My dear Lavina! how different is the vision today from what it was ten years ago! what we thought matter is pure spirit. In it are contained those Nam Bright Assemblies of Adepts and Arahaats and Seers! Why does any one say they are mere mountains, dead matter?" said Allala.

"My Prince of Peace! God be thanked, we have through the Grace of Lord, seen the Truth," submitted Lavina and continued, "What great peace rests everywhere! What great Love beams from the brow of the smallest flower! The grass has the blood of man in its little legs. The stones are deluged with divinity Beauty, as of mother in her last incarnation, dwells in our eyes. In

our soul lives the Master and it is his own eyes that see Himself everywhere My Lord! how simple is Truth, He is everywhere. There are no things, no matter. He is the All. He is the Each. And how wonderful, yet. He is not all this too. As He, the Great One said while departing from us at Poali Kanta. . . . .” I am thyself, “-O Prince of Peace!” Said Lavina and fell at the feet of Allala. And instantaneously there was a brilliant flash of light seen on the glaciers and a voice came! –“Hail! Hail, Manmahaji! The Glaciers salute thee. Hail! Hail, Manmahaji!”

Transfigured was Lavina. As she rose, he saw a million figures of Allala all around filling, all space; on the skies and on the lands, was her own Allala! And she saw there stood behind him all those powers of Heaven whose brilliance was seen in the lifting palm of the Great Albita. The song that was tickling always in her blood was on the tongue of every leaf of the tree, of every blade of grass and the flowers pouted their red baby-lips to intonate it. The Himalayan air blew with it and the Himalayan streams chanted it in one great rhythm, the very same in which the golden rays of the Sun danced on the white old, fairy temples of the snowy peaks. And the pine, the oak forests sang it.

And there floated Lavina in the beauty of his Face, an exquisite perfume of his breath.

Allala had, by that time, nothing extra-ordinary of the great extraordinariness of the mystic novice about him, except that he looked like a miniature of the Great Himalayas, with his prominent high crowned head with its flowing tresses and his new little beard and the blue sprouting hair-shade of the upper lip and soft white bloom on his whole pure skin, as one finds on a ripe peach, his eyes calm and clear as the lake of Mansarovar and the song of *Nam* leaping in his blood, like the ceaseless chant on the tongues of the Himalayan streams, wherever he stood, he reminded every one of the Himalayan glaciers, the Mansarovar lake, the snow, the dream of all that Heavenly scenery, the bloom of the Himalayan flowers of the great pure snows. He now carried a little rosary of sapphires on his wrist and was dressed in long flowing gold-coloured robe, as if the scene of the Sun-rise on the glaciers was symbolised for ever in him.

Above all, his expression had the ever-new freshness of the great snowy regions, whose general effect on those who came near him was of an abiding cooling, cooling peace.

Seeing Lavina transfigured, he said with his usual open child-like smile! “Lavina!”

And Lavina ran like her sheep to him, saying! “My Allala! you incarnate the whole glory of the Himalayas in yourself. You reflect the whole glory of the Heaven in you,” and saying this Lavina ran and clung passionately round his neck, as she used to cling round the neck of her sheep.

And Allala embraced her passionately and on they went laughing and talking, like two comrades, holding each other’s hands, as two children of the same mother. And from their steps came the sound of *Albita! Albita*, and the rocks echoed and re echoed it.

The old Tistan was on his last journey from the plains to the Himalayas and down below the Ascents of the *Garden of Fairies*, was seen the flock of Tistan grazing, as the swift-streams of the Vashishtha Ashram went dancing to meet the silver flood of the billing Ganga flowing in the valley at the foot of this great mountain of Vashishtha Ashram.



And Lavina cried with joy like a child: “There Allala! There! Mala grazing on the green turf! There is the father’s camp!”

Allala and Lavina both quickened their steps and the sheep too saw their old comrades and all were almost thought-carried to the place sooner than they expected. Lavina, however, was the first to reach and surprise the embrace of her father, mother and the little brothers, sisters, who by this time were as she was when she left them, excepting the two little ones that were just old enough to tend the flock. By this time, Allala too arrived and the whole family stood in deep reverence forgetting that it was their own young Allala. Allala had changed from a young, pale thoughtful boy to a great adept, prophet poet and philosopher. He had thick, clustering long tresses as before falling all about his shoulders, which Lavina while coming down the hill combed every day and parted them in the middle and in addition, a little tapering beard and new growing moustache that had barely covered his upper lip which rested on the lower, both glowing deep red in their rare divine water. His face in its deep innocence similar to what one finds on the face of babies, shone with the lustre of prophecy, and inspired in everyone that saw him total self-surrender in his love, physical magnetic love. The whole family of Tistan then fell on the ground before him, kissing the green turf that lay under his feet and as Allala lifted with his own hands and embraced them, they were seen with their mouths full of flowers, their foreheads “betilaked” by mother Nature with the petals of little violets— *OM MANI PADMANI OM* came out of their quivering lips and the soft whispers of Albita, Albita, fell on the trembling air from the pores of the love suffused bodies of the old and the young of the Tistan’s family.

And in that standing posture, all eyes closed and their white faces were seen aglow like the snows of Himalayas under the Sun. And the streams of tears trickled free singing “God be thanked, we have met!”

“Tistan the Great! ten years are gone, but for your help, I would have been a rock by this time, your godly daughter, Lavina has been like God’s nectar to me, her service a song of life, her devotion a hymn of His *Nam* and she, whole of her, a gift to me from Him, of poetry and prophecy,” said Allala.

The old Tistan cried like a child with his daughter in his arms and his tears flowed like wreaths of pearls over her long black tresses!

Her mother too sat, in tears of excess of joy and thankfulness. And her brothers and their new wives and her younger sisters, all felt as if they were assembled in a fair and the joyous festivities akin to those of feeding thousands of saints were on. They felt that the hills and the valleys were filled with people come to share their joy. Such was the mass of joy in the little tent of the old shepherd Tistan!

Next day, Allala and Lavina parted from Tistan and the twenty sheep who were by this time, quite old and tired, had to be left there with Tistan’s flock amongst their own sisters and their children, the frolicking lambkins.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE PRIZE OF BEAUTY

Years passed, no news of Manmahaji came, though the king had sent his emissaries in all directions to find him. The king knew from the moment the Princess saw him, that the Princess Prakasina had already given the whole of herself to him. It was, therefore, a shock as of death, to learn that Manmahaji had gone, no one knew where to the great grief of the old man of Gangola, the King, the Princess Prakasina and her two maids of honour Mahina and Lokina. The Princess was then in her 27<sup>th</sup> year of age and the King had grown very old, his hair had turned all grey, though his face beamed with the glow of new youth. He still ministered to his people, but, at times, he could not contain his feelings of grief, seeing the condition of his daughter and would burst into tears like a child.

And the Princess Prakasina had shrunk to a shadow of herself wholly absorbed in Manmahaji, though her eyes showed no sign of any human pain or any wasting disease. During the last 12 years unknown to herself, but only marked by her father, she was slowly being love-starved, until she was reduced to mere skeleton.

Lokina and Mahina provided her with the food for her soul, otherwise, possibly, the shock of the sudden disappearance of Manmahaji might have actually killed her. Mahina's music and Lokina's devotion kept the life-lamp of the Princess Prakasina burning.

One day, the King came in Prakasina's room and said: "Daughter! the news has come just now that a great Bodhisattva is on the borders of Anardha Raj near the Gangola hills. People are flocking to him from far and near, every one seeking him for his *Darshanam*. He is so beautiful that no one asks of him anything. Seeing him, they grow infinite themselves. The one universal desire of every one and all, is, that they should be in the sunshine of his presence. They desire nothing more. As the moths fly around a burning lamp, the people— men, women and children swarm around him, in deep fascination for him. From the descriptions people give of him, I think, at last, Manmahaji has come, because I saw the same vision this morning which I saw on that fateful day, years ago and on my tongue was the name—"Albita," "Albita!" I think he has come!"

Prakasina got up and sat on her bed and too weak as she was, she fainted off on account of this effort. Mahina and Lokina ran to her assistance, but the King had already taken her in his lap supporting her head on his broad breast.

"Manmahaji has come!" —came inaudibly the words out of her pale lips as Princess Prakasina opened her eyes!

"Daughter: I only said, I guess he has come, for the news has come that a Bodhisattva is on the borders of Anardha Raj and he is an object of universal worship. They say he has the limbs of the cupid and the eyes of God. I guess it is Manmahaji!" said the King.

"Father! take me there to him. If not Manmahaji, atleast, we will have the rare Darshanam of a man of God," said the Princess

“You are too weak to be taken out, my daughter!” said the King.

“No, father! you never refuse me any request. Is it not strange, you refuse me this little one today? Mahina! bring me my that dress which I was wearing on the day I met Manmahaji, the very same! Lokina come! I wish to have a bath. And see, father! how strong I am for the journey, you will just see! You be ready to go with me. Is it not father? Am I vexing you, father! Why are you so sad? Why tears roll down your eyes?” said Prakasina and wiped the tears of her father, kissed him and then clung round his neck.

“Father! don’t you wish me to go! if my childish desire hurts you, I will not go,” said Prakasina.

“No, my daughter! it is not that. I am sorry to see you in this condition. You are to be helped out of your bed by Lokina and you can hardly get up from your bed without fainting. And how great is your wish to see Manmahaji.”

Prakasina clinging to his neck said: “Father” and burst out weeping. Again she fainted in the lap of her father.

“Father! Manmahaji has come!” again she said as she regained consciousness and opened her eyes.

“My daughter! every thing is ready for your journey! and the Sun has set, but all arrangements for the night journey have been completed,” said the King.

“Very good! how loving of you, father! you are so good. I have vexed you by my erratic life, instead of being of any help to you, I have been a constant anxiety. I have been so bad,” said the Princess.

“Prakasina! you have been the delight of my life, my very life. Without you, how could I have lived? How can I live? Why are you saying such things? Love me. Come! Kiss me, come, embrace me. You are the jewel decorating my soul. In fact, it is due to my inability of finding Manmahaji that you have suffered so much,” said the King and tears come running down in deep silence from his eyes like two separate threads of falling rain.

“No father! you are again accusing yourself. It hurts me. We did our best, but jewels once lost are seldom found, unless God so willeth. It is true, I should not have thought of the jewel any more. But you know, how brave I have been. I have been very heroic in bearing the separation, but if the physical body gives way, it does not mean my soul is weak. At last, I have been good in not pining for him mentally,” said Prakasina.

“Lokina! come, dear soul! and help your sister to get ready for the night’s journey. And happily it is moonlight tonight and it will be delightful for you all to go,” said the King.

Princess Prakasina was helped into the palanquin and on either side rode on horse back Lokina and Mahina. The King rode on his horse in front and a few soldiers were marching behind to bear their Princess, turn by turn. The King said: “We go to the hills near Gangola village.” And the party started. At day break, they reached the top of the hills.

“Father! where have we come? how do you expect that Boddhisatva here?” said Prakasina.

“Daughter! there yonder, I see, a crowd of men is coming this way, evidently to this very spot, led by a man surrounded by a large halo whose radiance falls upon my eyelids,” said the King. “Then why have these brothers placed my palanquin in the direction of the Sun? Why don’t they turn my face in the direction of his coming?” said Prakasina.

Immediately the soldiers turned the face of the palanquin the other way, enabling the Princess to look with ease in the same direction.

“Ah! father! he is a glory, my eyelids are also receiving the little shocks of joy of the light of the large nimbus that is crowning his tressy head,” said Prakasina.

By this time, the assembly came quite close and the Boddhisatva asked the crowds to stop below the hill, as he had to go up the hill quite alone by himself.

The King advanced by getting down the hill to welcome the extraordinary man.

“O welcome! we have been searching for you here since day break,” said the king.

“It is very kind of you. You are the king of Anardha. My name is Allala and I hail from the Himalayas from a monastery called Poali Kanta,” said Allala.

“You are welcome! my daughter is very anxious to see you, as she is about to pass away from this earth.”

“Why? is it so bad? we do not believe in disease, we believe in soul. She must have had some deep seated pain in her soul and the reduction of the body is but a symptom,” said Allala.

By this time, they were at the top of the hill. The Sun had gilded the hills with the liquid gold and joy seemed to swim on the flowing Sunlight.

The Princess at the very first sight of him, recognised him instantaneously.

“Manmahaji has come!” said the Princess and fainted away.

At the signal from the eyes of Allala, all left the top of the hill and went down. Allala was standing by the side of the palanquin, looking with a fixed gaze at the face of the fainted Prakasina.

After a while, she opened her eyes and said again: “Manmahaji has come!”

“Yes, my Prakasina! I have come and you were quite right as to the contents of the bundle. Here is the necklace of five rubies for you which my mother left for you. She has sent me to you now and has asked me to put it round your neck. May I put this necklace round your neck?” said Allala.

“Manmahaji! you!!” shrieked with joy the Princess but her shriek could not be louder than a whisper and she fainted again and two large tears trickled down her eyes and rested on her hollow cheeks.

Manmahaji again fixed his gaze on her and she opened her eyes. “May I put this necklace round your neck,” said Allala.

“Pray!” said Prakasina.

As the necklace of five rubies given by Albita was put round her neck, a fire leapt in the blood of the Princess and she got up and sat.

“Do not exert yourself. Prakasina: Your body is still weak,” said Allala.

“Mahina, Lokina: where are you?” said the Princess.

“Why? I am with you,” said he, and saying that supported her.

“Manmahaji!”

“Yes! darling!”

“So my eyes see you after all.”

“Yes, Prakasina! I was never away from you. You know you had won me as a prize for your beauty,” said he.

The princess smiled and said: “But that was a joke.” It seemed after years, twelve long years the Princess Prakasina got back her smile. The return of her smile was wonderful.

“Prakasina! You have won the prize,” said he.

“Beauty? where is it? the skeleton is no more worthy of you,” said the Princess.

“This skeleton is a temple and I, its worshipper,” said Allala.

Suddenly the talk stopped, the Princess’ eyes closed, her face glowed and two large tears of ineffable bliss again trickled down her eyes.

“God is Great that has brought Manmahaji back,” sighed the Princess.

Manmahaji had already healed her of her chronic love-illness and now advanced to lift her up from her invalid’s palanquin. Prakasina laid her head softly on his bosom and stood holding him in the garland of her arms thrown around his neck. Allala held her firmly in a life-giving embrace.

A cry of joy went forth from Prakasina-“Father! Father!! Manmahaji! Manmahaji!!

Lokina and Mahina were standing close by and came running at her cry of joy and there they saw Manmahaji and Prakasina standing under the showers of Heavenly light poured by the morning Sun over their devoted heads.

“Manmahaji! salutations! you cheated the Princess long of her prize,” said Lokina and tried to obstruct the free flow of the wreathes of her smiles with the edge of her garment.

“What for all this trouble you gave her and reduced her to a mere shadow of herself?” said Mahina upbraidingly, taking advantage other age, being the elder sister of Manmahaji.

“Sisters! it were better to have been a monk first and the prize afterwards, than to have been a prize first and a monk afterwards,” said Allala casting simultaneously a smile and a look on each of his beautiful upbraiders.

By this time, the whole assembly came up and there in the assembly was Lavina the brightest figure, dressed as a Himalayan shepherd girl with a long rosary of large sapphires hanging down her neck. And she said advancing towards Manmahaji and the Princess.

“Allala! I congratulate you on your beautiful renunciation of your old severe monkism.”

“Lavina!” introducing her to Prakasina at the same time, “Lavina! was I ever a monk? You, you entered in my vague life as love and you guided it and let it and gave it a meaning. Lavina, congratulations to you on your having carried out your resolve of helping me! Without you, I would have been but a barren, bleak rock of the Himalayas! Thrice blessed you, you the daughter of the great Tistan.”

The monk and the Princess were wedded thus on the old hill near Gangola to the great joy of the assembly.

The latter part of the story of this grand attainment to the simplicity of love and its realisation was told by Lavina to every one; and Manmahaji was known later on, as one of the greatest kings of Anardha, but to Lokina, Mahina and the Princess Prakasina, he was always the simple Allala of Lavina, and they always called him by that pet name.

“Allala!” “Allala!” would coo the white Dove of the Anardha palace, the Princess Prakasina and as he would coo in reply “Yes! Prakasina!” she would go away from him and go away, clapping her hands, running into the embrace of Lavina, with the eyes of Allala following her and she would kiss Lavina’s broad rosy cheeks and eyes and forehead and cling again and again to her neck and coo again “Allala”, “Allala”, “Look how sweet! I, too, am living on the shores of Mansarovar and in the monastery of Poali Kanta!” and would go filling the whole Palace of Anardha with her gay laughter as of old.